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THE PROTESTANT FAITH AND CHALLENGE

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BY

R. PYKE

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Books

PREFACE

Two or three years ago, I began to give lectures at my week-night service, on 'Protestantism.' It was a surprise to me to find how eagerly the people listened. The numbers grew in attendance from week to week, and I was convinced that the comparative neglect of this important subject could not be justified. Since then I have frequently discussed the subject on public platforms, and have invariably found a response similar to that which was given in my own Church.

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The story of the Reformation is a thrilling and wonderful one, and it should be possible to repeat it, without violence to Christian charity, and without doing anything to block the way to that unity, which, however far off, must surely mark the end of all the Church's travail.

The present volume is in response to a definite request. I have tried to be just, and have taken pains to be accurate. The people I have had in my mind as readers, while I have been writing, are those to whom it is my privilege to minister.

I have cherished the hope, also, that the chapters may be of use in our Guilds and

Young People's Societies. For this reason, I have sought, while preserving a continuity in treatment, to make each chapter a complete study in itself. Whether the series of suggestions for 'further study' at the end of the chapters, will prove of value I cannot say; but it seemed to me that what was required, was, not so much questions on what is written, as indications where to find the subjects treated more fully.

I am indebted to my daughter-in-law, Mrs. Leonard Pyke, B.A., for reading the proofs; and to my colleague, the Rev. Alan T. Dale, B.D., for suggestions, and the Index. As much may be said, without making either responsible with me for any of the judgements found in the book.

R. PYKE.

PLYMOUTH.

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I

DARK DAYS

Introduction

It does not require a great deal of research to discover that the Church of the sixteenth century, when regarded in the light of the New Testament, exhibits the most mingled and astonishing elements. It would be a distasteful task were we called upon to describe in any detail the errors, the hard worldliness, and the inward corruption that were so frequently tolerated. It is enough to say that there were times when the head of the Church was a bustling soldier, and other times when he was an immoral prince. The Church had been organized so as to make it a formidable, and frequently a victorious competitor, with kings and armies. On every hand there was the evidence of a spiritual betrayal.

It will be our aim to give the facts their just and natural interpretation; and from the first we recognize frankly, that to seize upon the worst and ugliest aspects of the Church at any time, and by these alone to judge its value or its power, would be a perversion of history, and an injustice to truth itself. A Church that can produce, or even find a shelter for saints, is not wholly bad; and

even in the days of its lowest level the Church provided a home for devout souls. But, as we shall see, many of them did not refrain from condemning in the strongest terms those features of the Church which were so manifestly alien to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The strength of the Protestant position is not derived from the weakness or the folly of those who oppose it, it is rather to be found in the truth and beauty of its ultimate and abiding principles.

The Roman Catholics have made repeated and laborious attempts to vilify Martin Luther; but it is no purpose of this volume, by way of reprisals, to attempt the task of proving every Pope to be unworthy, and all members of the Roman Church to be misguided or lost souls. It is sufficient to recognize, what no one could effectively dispute, that the Church, which on the eve of the Reformation owned half the land in Europe,[1] had then fallen to the most appalling depths. To ignore this, would be to leave the Reformation an inexplicable upheaval, without any moral justification. But only in so far as it is necessary to interpret the mighty and shattering protest of Luther, shall we recall these ignoble chapters in the story of the Roman Church. Martin Luther was simply shocked into resistance and revolt. He saw with his own eyes a Church which had betrayed honesty, purity and truth.

[1] Lindsay *Reformation* p. 11.

As we pursue the story, we shall see how men of courage and insight were raised up to throw off the fetters, and claim freedom for the word of the Gospel. We shall try to show how it was that the Church degenerated, and her leaders framed an organization which was so hard and worldly that it was able to baffle and resist Empires.

The natural course of study, therefore, will be first of all to look at the Church as it is outlined or adumbrated in the New Testament. From that it is proper to trace, however briefly, the developments as they are visible in the early centuries. We must also take into account the intrusion of the priest, and the process by which the Bishop of Rome came to be the Pope. That will help us to understand how it was that the Church gradually lost its savour, and hardened into an institution which acquired vast power, and hungered for still more. Then comes the pleasanter study of the dawn, when prophetic souls foretold, both by word and act, the approaching day. Martin Luther will deserve far more space than we can give to him; but in any study of the Reformation, he is naturally the central and dominating figure. The ultimate principles of the Protestant faith, such as justification by faith, the right of private judgement, and the priesthood of all believers, must be discussed. Later developments can only be treated briefly, and a final chapter will be devoted to the situation to-day as the present writer sees it.

It is unnecessary to say that so vast a subject can be dealt with only in outline; but it is hoped the outline will be faithful, and not without some idea of proportion. A bird's-eye view is not without its value, and this is what a large number of people appear to desire. On every page, subjects are dealt with that might have been followed up with utmost profit. But a reader who rejects a book because he understands that it is not exhaustive, can know but little about the interlacings and ramifications of the history of those truths we so surely believe.

There are the most urgent reasons that our young people should know why it is their fathers resisted unto blood. We do not need to do more than to show the stern grandeur, the fascination, and even the alluring loveliness of the Protestant faith, in order to stir up in the hearts of this generation a firm resolve to be both its defenders and exponents. To know what the Protestant faith is, is to love it; and the day has arrived when it is the duty of us all both to learn and to teach.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—How came the Church of the sixteenth century to own so much land?

2.—Name three to whom you would assign the first place as forerunners of the Reformation.

3.—In what sense is the Protestant faith both 'stern' and 'lovely'?

Chapter I

THE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

When we turn to the Gospels to find out what Jesus said about the Church, we discover, to our surprise, that He appears to have said hardly anything at all on the subject. He discoursed to the people, and to His disciples, on many themes; and of all these, the Kingdom of Heaven was the one on which He said most, but He is practically silent concerning the Church. Neither in the Sermon on the Mount, nor in any of the parables does He say anything on this subject. On the love of God, the nature of discipleship, man's duty to man, He spoke freely. He urged kindness to the poor, the weak and the unfortunate; He said much concerning prayer, and God's readiness to help the weak and the penitent; but when we try to find out what was His thought of the Church, we discover that He is said to have used the word only twice. Once in response to Peter's great confession, (Matt. xvi. 18) and once when He was instructing His disciples in the way they should deal with an erring brother (Matt. xviii. 15–17).

It must be observed, too, that neither of those two passages has escaped the searching questions of a sober criticism. It is remarkable, for example, that the words in the first of those passages, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church,' are found only in Matthew's Gospel. The incident with which this passage is connected, is found both in Mark and Luke, but in these there is no reference to Peter as the 'rock' on which the Church is built. This is all the more remarkable when we remember that Mark's Gospel is generally believed to have been inspired, if not even dictated by Peter. The words themselves are so extraordinary, that if they mean what the Roman Catholic Church teaches, it is scarcely to be believed that they should thus have been entirely omitted.

We may, however, yield nothing to the legitimate question raised by scholarship, and accept the words as actually spoken by Christ. What then do they mean? It will be remembered that our Lord had addressed to His disciples the searching inquiry, 'But whom say ye that I am?' To that question it was Peter who replied, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Evidently this great confession of faith was welcomed by our Lord with joy and deep emotion. He said in reply, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona!' Such perception was nothing less than a revelation of God. Then it was, according to Matthew, that He went on to say, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.'

The interpretation which the Roman Church has put upon these words, is suggested by the fact that they are inscribed in Latin on the great church of St. Peter in Rome. Cut into the stone in letters twelve feet deep, they encircle the vast building. It is contended by that Church, that Peter is the foundation, that the Church rests upon him, and that to him was committed a spiritual authority, in which no other disciple had a share. This exposition is essential to the elaboration of her theory that Peter was the first of all the bishops, and that every true bishop of the Church, is able to trace back his authority, in an unbroken continuity to the great Apostle who received those unique powers which have been so unfailingly transmitted.

Hence it is that any so-called Church, whose ministry is not endowed with the spiritual prerogative, which comes through these bishops alone, has not a valid ministry, and the so-called Churches in which they minister are not true Churches at all.

But when we ask ourselves if this is really the true meaning of our Lord's words, we have reason, not only to doubt such an exposition, but emphatically to reject it. We should have expected, for example, that such a distinction would at least be recognized elsewhere in the New Testament, but there is no trace of it. Indeed, what evidence we have at all, points in a contrary direction.

For instance, it is quite certain that Paul knew nothing of Peter 'as the rock,' upon

which the Church was built. Had he known this, he would not, and could not have written as he did. In his Epistle to the Galatians (ii.) he says of Peter, 'I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed.' He then goes on to describe Peter's action as timid and vacillating ; in fact, he makes it quite clear that in his judgement, Peter had betrayed both his vision, and a great principle. He says that Peter fell away. First he ate with the Gentiles, and then as the result of a reactionary deputation from Jerusalem, he withdrew and ate no more with them. It is not likely that Paul would have spoken in this way, had he known that Peter was so exalted and unique, and that in him, somehow the validity of the whole Church reposed.

Again, Peter himself, in his own Epistle, gives no hint of occupying the superior position to which Roman Catholics say he was raised by our Lord. On the contrary, he says very definitely, that he was 'a fellow elder' (1 Pet. v. 1). 'The shepherd and bishop of their souls,' he says, was Christ Himself.

When, therefore, we honestly try to probe to the meaning of our Lord's words, we feel that only a pre-conceived theory would lead us to believe that it was Peter who was the Rock, or that a continuity, traceable through the centuries right back to him, is essential to the true Church. The Rock of which Christ spoke, was the recognition of Himself as the Messiah, and the full confession of His divinity. Upon these qualities, rather than upon Peter,

the structure of the great spiritual institution is to be established.

The only other passage in the Gospels, in which the word 'Church' occurs (Matt. xviii. 15-17), throws no light at all upon our immediate inquiry. Christ here directs that in dealing with a brother, who has given reason for offence, the method employed shall be to talk to him personally and alone, first of all. If that fails, two or three others shall be called in to confer; and if again that fails, as a final step, they should 'tell it unto the Church.' We need not rob this phrase of its significance ; but how easy it is to overload it!

We do not agree, however, with any one who would say that there is no Church adumbrated in the Gospels at all. To us the very choice of the disciples, and the care with which our Lord trained them, are evidence of His desire that the spiritual energies, presently to be released, should be conserved, and operate within an organized body. The only point that must be appreciated at this stage is, that it is in vain any one turns to the Gospels, for evidence to establish the claims made by the Roman Catholic Church. Peter, we say, was evidently not recognized by his contemporaries, as the Rock upon which the Church was built, nor does it appear that he himself ever made such a claim.

Let it be granted, then, that our Lord had the Church in His heart and mind throughout, and we can understand why it was that when He had risen from the dead, He told His disciples to wait until they were 'endued with

power from on high,' (Luke xxiv. 49). The company which met at Jerusalem in response to His command was a considerable one, but they were as yet only a potential Church. Not until the Spirit came upon them did they realize, and express, the life and power of a Church. They resembled an engine which cannot function until the electric current makes it throb with power. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the waiting disciples, transformed them. The Christian Church was born. The company became a living whole, filled with power. Their eyes were opened, the dull obscurities of history were interpreted, and the Cross was transfigured. The tragedy of Calvary was recognized as a triumph. The risen Christ was at once acclaimed the Saviour of all men. They began forthwith to proclaim the startling message that whosoever would call upon the name of the Lord should be saved (Acts ii. 21). From that time forth the Church is a visible organization, and begins to fulfil the purpose of 'the Body of Christ.' Very soon little groups of converted people in various parts, began to rejoice together, looking for 'the day of the Lord.'

Peter was the foremost preacher on the day of Pentecost; but the Church a few years later, grew and multiplied largely under the evangelizing ministry of Paul. This flaming Apostle, with unquenchable enthusiasm, travelled in two continents, leaving a luminous trail of little Churches in the cities and towns where he laboured. And to these he addressed

those wonderful letters, which still enrich the Church, and will continue to do so down to the end of time.

Paul was too practical a missionary to leave the Churches without the protection of some sort of organization. He, himself, returned to the little societies, when it was possible, 'confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith' (Acts xiv. 22; xviii. 23). Later we see him appointing 'elders,' whose sacred duty it was to watch with paternal affection over the defenceless, and to safeguard the untaught from disorder and false teaching (1 Tim. v. 5). Even before the missionary activities of Paul, 'deacons' had been appointed in the Church at Jerusalem. They were first of all requested to care for widows and needy people, and to supervise the distribution of those material comforts which had been provided by the generosity of the more wealthy (Acts. vi. 2).

Thus the two orders of Church officers, deacons and elders, were the first to be recognized in those early days. Paul in writing to Timothy says significantly, that deacons must 'be grave not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre' (1 Tim. iii. 8). In the Epistle to the Philippians, however, we read of 'bishops and deacons' (i. 1), but scholarship has made it clear, that 'bishops and elders' in the New Testament cannot be distinguished. Lightfoot has settled that once and for all. He says, 'In the Apostolic writings the two are different

designations of one and the same office.'[1] And even when later, the bishop begins to appear as the presiding officer of the Church, he does not at all resemble the monarchical bishop we know in these days, but his relationship to the Church more closely resembled that of a minister in charge of a Church.

Other orders are mentioned, but these serve rather to indicate the opulence of spiritual gifts which existed, than to point to a definitely organized Church, with graded officers, culminating in a supreme and acknowledged head.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians (iv. 11) we read, 'And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.' Without any attempt at a precise delineation of the ministry assigned to each of these orders, it should be sufficient to say that the apostles were men who by reason of special intimacy with Christ and a personal call, went forth, wherever they were led by the spirit, to preach the Gospel. The 'prophet' was one charged to proclaim God's will to his generation, and to do so with the peculiar authority of a divine agent. The 'evangelist' addressed the claims of Christ with searching power to the individual seeking immediate and open decision. The pastor was generally a shepherd, who watched with a loving and zealous solicitude over the flock, defending them from the fierce attack of the world and the evils of false teaching. The

[1] *The Christian Ministry*, p. 20.

'teacher' instructed those who desired to learn in the things which were fundamental, much as a catechist might do to-day.[1]

We look in vain, then, to the New Testament for even the rudiments of a hierarchy, and the complex organization which was afterwards developed. Not even in outline does it appear. The organization which grew up in later years, and which frequently hampered, coarsened, and almost paralysed the Church, had its roots in later days, and other conditions, which it must be our task, as clearly as may be to describe.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—How do you distinguish between the Church and the Kingdom?

2.—Make a careful study of Matt. xvi. 13–23 and compare with it Mark viii. 27–33 and Luke ix. 18–22.

3.—Give an account of the building of St. Peter's in Rome, and how money was raised for the purpose.

4.—Why is it believed that Mark wrote his Gospel largely at the dictation of Peter?

5.—Give an account of the sharp difference between Paul and Peter.

6.—Study the effect of Pentecost upon the disciples.

7.—Trace the Churches which Paul re-visited.

8.—Who was Lightfoot, and what did he make clear and final in his essay *The Christian Ministry?*

[1] Cf. Archbishop Temple in *Jerusalem Report*, Vol. III. p. 158.

Chapter II

THE PRIEST APPEARS

The preceding chapter has shown that there is no trace of any elaborate Church organization to be found in the pages of the New Testament. But what is even more remarkable is, that we look in vain therein for the priest, functioning in the Church with spiritual and exclusive powers.

In view of the place which is claimed and occupied by the priest, in a large section of Christendom to-day, that fact deserves to be carefully investigated.

We know that the priest in the Old Testament days was appointed of God, that he might serve as an intermediary between God and man. He accepted the sacrifices on behalf of the people, and offered them to God. To the high priest alone were permitted the awe-inspiring intimacies of communion with God in the Holy of Holies.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, however, is very explicit in his interpretation of Christ as the fulfilment of the law. Those blessings which were foreshadowed in ancient rites and sacrifice are fully realized in Him.

He is the 'Great High Priest' (iv. 14). All priests who had gone before Him were imperfect men ; and needed to offer up sacrifices for their own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. But Christ was 'holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens.' The sacrifice which He offered for 'the sins of the people' was the sacrifice of Himself, 'once for all' (vii. 26-7).

This passage of itself would lead us to expect what has been finally established by research and scholarship. Dr. Lightfoot says : 'The only high priests under the Gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the Saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood.'[1] To these words may be added a passage by Dr. W. Robertson Smith:

'In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the author easily demonstrates the inadequacy of the mediation and atoning rites of the Old Testament, and builds upon this demonstration, the doctrine of the effectual high priesthood of Christ, who in His sacrifice of Himself, truly "led His people to God," not leaving them outside as He entered the sanctuary, but taking them with Him into spiritual nearness to the throne of grace. The argument leaves no room for a special priesthood in the Christian Church, and in fact nothing of the kind is found in the oldest organizations of the new communities of faith.'[2]

[1] *The Christian Minstry*, p. 16.
[2] *Ency. Brit.* XIX. p, 729.

The appearance of the priest within the Christian Church, therefore, is an event of the gravest significance; and true Protestants cannot reflect on the position he has taken, and the power he has exercised, without regret and sorrow.

When, however, we set about to examine the circumstances which explain his emergence, we are baffled by the lack of material. For a definite and considerable period, the history of the Church is very largely a blank; and it is precisely during this period that the priest, so familiar in Old Testament days, and familiar, too, in many other religions, re-appears in the Christian Church.

A quotation or two will confirm the statement that we have hardly any knowledge at all of an extremely important period. Dr. Workman says, 'Unfortunately the century which followed the death of St. Paul is a silent century that has left us but "fragments of fragments" of its history.'[1] Dr. E. F. Scott says, 'We know almost nothing of the history of the Church during the fifty years after Paul's death.'[2] Dr. Rendel Harris has described in picturesque fashion the same fact. 'My friend, Dr. Salmon, of Dublin,' he says, 'who was the keenest-witted man of any with whom I have had the happiness of intercourse, put it in this way : the Church went into a tunnel (between A.D. 60 and A.D. 100). We saw it go in, and we saw it come out, but what went

[1] *Christian Thought to the Reformation*, p. 5.
[2] *The First Age of Christianity*, p. 161.

on inside the tunnel we have no means of determining.' Dr. Harris goes on to say, 'We see the train go in, and we see it emerge; we see the prophet go in, and the priest emerge ; we see the Agape go in and the Eucharist emerge ; we see the Lord's Table go in, and the Altar emerge ; we see the Church enter the tunnel heavily laden with Eschatology and we see it come out with a reduced doctrine of the Last Things.'[1] It was then, during 'this uncharted area' that the priest, who, of course, had frequently been a despised minister of sacred things in Greece and Roman heathenism, obtained a footing in the Christian Church. He has remained in the Roman Catholic Church ever since, with claims which give him indefinite power and authority. However much we might regret his intrusion, there is nothing mysterious about it. We know how tenaciously the natural man clings to power; and sacrifices ease, health, and almost life itself, to obtain it. It is not to be marvelled at then, that during these early years of Church history, when Apostles had passed away, and the early enthusiasm had subsided, there were men who found an opportunity to acquire the power which a priest invariably enjoys. It is, therefore, to this period of obscurity we must turn for the disastrous origin of an exclusive priesthood in the Church.

For, as any one may see, it was the coming of the priest into the Church, that made

[1] *Glass Chalices of the First Century*, p. 1.

possible the terrible lapses of later days; and it is his presence in the Church, to-day, which is the greatest stumbling block to Christian unity. When the priest is acknowledged to have a divine right to stand between the penitent soul and Christ ; or when it is conceded that he is in possession of an exclusive power, so awful that he may change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the floodgates are opened to obscurantism and tyranny. The very light, which should expose the absurdities of the priest's claim is shut out. When he claims to give validity to a Sacrament, it is demanded that his word shall be meekly accepted ; and Roman Catholics generally show no inclination to doubt it. And yet, as Dr. Forsyth says, 'It becomes too absurd when we are asked to believe that a priestling, raw from his seminary, possesses, in virture of his ordination, a grace and power in Christ's name which do not belong to the holiest in outside communions. He can make his Sacrament more valid than . . . any of our mighty men! The thing can only be believed, either because people do not think or do not feel, or they accept the theories of men who work under a rigid and unspiritual logic, based on scholastic methods, and mistaken historical data.'[1]

But the priest contends that he has New Testament support; and it is our duty to hear what it is he has to say. The passage to which he turns, as to his charter, is in St. John's

[1] *The Charter of the Church*, p. 57.

Gospel (xx. 19-23). We read there that Christ was with His disciples after the Resurrection on the first day of the week. It was then He showed them His hands and His side, and uttered the tender and memorable words : 'Peace be unto you ; as the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.' The record proceeds : 'And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, " Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven. Whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." ' Now, we must firmly resist the temptation to whittle down the grandeur and significance of a great passage of Scripture, because it has been exploited to sustain what we believe to be untenable and false. We must all of us admit that more is implied in these impressive words of Christ than is usually recognized. It may very well be, and most certainly is so, that the Church to-day, neither in whole nor in part, is exercising the fullness of her power. A lack of faith and of true unity, does most certainly rob the Church of almost undreamt of possibilities. The 'unsearchable riches of Christ' remain for the most part unexplored, and immeasurable power is well nigh untapped by the Church. There may be a wonderful day coming, when miracles of healing and of salvation, will, indeed, be wrought by a believing, united, and Spirit-filled Church.

But that is altogether different from using these words, so as to provide an exclusive priesthood with such unique and awful power

as to rob ordinary people of their freedom, and even of their direct access to Christ Himself. 'Whatever the words mean, they must,' says Westcott, in his *Commentary*, 'be regarded as the commission of the Christian Society and not as that of the Christian Ministry.' In support of that it is to be observed that the words were not spoken to the eleven disciples exclusively, but to a general gathering of believers. This is evident from St. Luke, who in describing this scene, makes it clear that others, besides the disciples were present (xxiv. 33). But what is more remarkable still, it appears that one of the eleven was not present at the moment of our Lord's appearance. 'Thomas was not with them when Jesus came' (John xx. 24). It is not at all likely, therefore, that if it were the purpose of Jesus, solemnly to invest His disciples with that special spiritual power and authority, which the priest claims to possess, He would have chosen a time when one of the eleven was absent.

In this connexion it is appropriate to recall the subsequent doubt of Thomas, and the considerate gentleness with which Christ dispelled that doubt. And when we read the outburst of adoration, 'My Lord and my God!' we are convinced that whatever privileges were bestowed upon the other disciples, were shared in full measure by Thomas also. The priest then as such, we urge, has no standing in the Christian Church. He is an anachronism; and it was a sad day for Christianity

when he intruded, with an aggressive claim to remit or retain sins, to bind or to loose, to order or to threaten, to stand midway between man and God. 'Priestly pretension,' says Dr. Brown, 'has done more than anything else to rend the body of Christ.' We know and proclaim, without the shadow of a doubt that every devout and penitent believer may bring his sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving to God ; and the acceptable sacrifice is still 'a broken and contrite heart.'

It must not be forgotten, however, that the whole Church has a priestly office, and the neglect of all that is implied in such a doctrine, has made it easy for the 'priest' to enter and dominate. 'You are an elect race, a royal priesthood' (1 Pet. ii. 9). 'He made us to be a Kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father' (Rev. i. 6).

Thus while we reject with firm conviction the claims of the sacrificing priest, Anglican or Roman, we must not surrender, nor overlook the entrancing truth that the priesthood of believers is a reality, and to each of us is granted the awful and yet glorious possibility of offering 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service' (Rom. xiii. 1). The positive aspects of the Christian priesthood need to be more fully appreciated. The throne of the heavenly grace is accessible to all ; we may draw near with penitence and thanksgiving. The whole Church is priestly, and we have only ourselves to blame if we have allowed this grandeur to

be superseded by a conception which is satisfied with mere 'activities' and philanthropy.

The whole Church should bear herself with the dignity and the reverence of priests. We are invited to approach God. We have a sacrifice to offer, and prayers to present. Protestantism has the solemn beauty of the New Testament in its warp and woof; and we must beware that we do not throw away the precious content of an inspiring truth, in our eagerness to reject the evils which have gathered about its perversion. The priestly idea gives to a Church reverence in worship, and makes the detached and frivolous relationship which some Protestants think to be sufficient, simply unthinkable. The priest, who is an intruder, is excluded, not so much by an exposure of his groundless claims, as by a lofty conception which supersedes and makes intolerable a narrow and false interpretation.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—Study the function of the priest as described in the Old Testament.

2.—Give an account of the strained relations between priest and prophet. See T. H. Robinson's *Prophets of Israel.*

3.—Trace the passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews which show that the priest is superseded in Christ.

4.—In what way is the presence of the priest a stumbling block to the unity of the Church?

5.—Study carefully John xx. 19–24, and Luke xxiv. 33.

6.—What are the indications that the Church has lost a power of healing? Consult Dr. Cairn's most stimulating book *The Faith that Rebels* (Chapter VI).

7.—Discuss 'the priesthood of all believers.'

8.—Elucidate the following sentence: 'Cyprian was the first to co-ordinate a specific sacrifice, namely the sacrifice of the Eucharist, with a specific priesthood.' See Dr. C. Anderson Scott's *Evangelical Doctrine Bible Truth*, pp. 181–222.

Chapter III

THE PAPACY

When we set ourselves to explain the origin of bishop, priest, or pope, we must remember that no single or simple reason is likely to be sufficient. It is easy for example, to show that human nature is fond of power, fonder of power even than of money, and this almost universal craving accounts for the way in which many men with the opportunity seize the reins, and drive relentlessly enough all who are at their mercy. It was this passion against which our Lord warned His disciples continually. 'He that is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve. . . . I am among you as he that serveth' (Luke xxii. 26-7).

To explain the origin of the Papacy, we must place another and a nobler consideration by the side of the mean and clamorous passion for power. The Church was beset by enemies within and without, and the struggle with the surrounding paganism was increasing. False teaching was introduced, and a low standard of morals was apt to be approved. Some of the bishops, therefore, who acted with auto-

cratic simplicity, did so because they could not maintain discipline with any milder measures. They had to resist the innovations and blandishments of persons, whose triumph within the Church, would have resulted in complete disintegration.

These two factors of such unequal moral worth, often mingled, and might indeed, at times, be found in the same human heart; so readily does good and evil find a common lodging place! The Papacy itself has been repeatedly sustained now by the one element, now by the other, and at times by both working together.

But our immediate task is, to inquire how the papacy itself originated. We know something of the astonishing claims of the Pope in our own day. He is regarded as nothing less than the Vicar of Christ, the venerable Head of the Church, and when he speaks ex cathedra, his utterances are claimed to be infallible. All this is based upon the assumption that he is the direct and undoubted successor of Peter, who was himself, it is argued, 'the Rock' on which the Church is built.

We have already offered an interpretation of the words, 'Thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build My Church.'[1] Let us now bring certain facts under review, which must be considered, if we are to come to a conclusion as to Peter's primacy, or the Pope's standing.

It is certainly remarkable, as we have shown, that there is not another single passage of

[1] Chapter I.

Scripture which supports the theory that Peter was the Rock. It is true he was a man of robust personality, and with capacity for vigorous speech. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that more than once he is the foremost figure where boldness and leadership are required. But there is nowhere any manifest recognition of him as the foundation of the Church. On the contrary, Paul says emphatically, 'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus' (1 Cor. iii. 11). And when in a later Epistle, he speaks explicitly of the Church, he says it is ' built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone' (Eph. ii. 20). We should have expected some allusion to the unique position of Peter, had Paul known it; but we look in vain for any such word. We have seen also that Paul, so far from acclaiming Peter as ' the Rock' speaks of him as lacking in stability (Gal. ii. 11-12).

When, however, we begin to examine whatever data there may be, we are confronted with the surprising question: Was Peter ever in Rome at all? The evidence has been scrutinized with the utmost thoroughness, and there is still room for doubt.

While Dr. C. J. Cadoux says, 'He was certainly there for some little time, possibly three or four years, and was certainly martyred there,'[1] an equally distinguished scholar, Prof. W. Schmiedel, after the most searching

[1] *Catholicism and Christianity*, p. 434.

examination of patristic evidence, comes to a precisely opposite conclusion. He says, 'Our decision must, therefore, decidedly be that Peter never was in Rome at all.'[1] It is to say the least of it, unfortunate for the Roman Catholic, that so vast a superstructure rests upon such shifting sands.

The development of the papacy, however, is easily intelligible in the light of history. As difficulties arose, the bishops naturally grew in importance, and almost insensibly, the Bishop of Rome came to be associated with the pre-eminence of his city. To be in Rome was to be at the centre. The Church itself there, was both wealthy and vigorous. In conferences therefore, which were necessary between the bishops, the Roman bishop was almost inevitably invested with something of the supremacy of his city. After a century or two he rose, partly by personal claim, and partly by the concessions of his brethren, to an eminence where he was recognized as *primus inter pares*.

It was not, however, until A.D. 189 that the Roman bishop claimed authority for himself, apart from his Church; and it was nearly twenty years later that we have the first reference to an apostolic succession, mediated through the Bishop of Rome, who claimed at the same time the power to forgive sins.[2]

But as soon as the theory of the Papacy came into existence, it was fortified by the most fantastic arguments; and later was sustained

[1] *Ency. Bib.* IV. 4608. [2] Dr. John Brown *Apostolical Succession* p. 310.

by the most unblushing fiction. What is known as the 'Decretals of Isidore' was exploited in support of the Papacy, though these turned out to be the clumsiest of forgeries. These 'decretals,' which were fabricated about A.D. 850, represented that some sixty letters, then adduced, were written by the Bishop of Rome. Every one of these was fictitious! The only wonder to us now is, that an invention, so obviously absurd, could have been accepted by any one. Bishops, for example, were made to quote Scripture from a Latin translation that was made long after they were dead! One bishop was made to write a letter to another, who lived two hundred years later than his correspondent! Scripture was torn and mangled to support both the papal system, and an inviolate caste of priests. 'The supremacy of the pope, the dignity and privileges of the bishop of Rome, the whole hierachy from the highest to the lowest degree, their sanctities and immunities were upheld and glorified. The priests were represented as the very apple of God's eye . . . Even bad priests, if they do not fall from the faith must be tolerated as sent by God.'[1] A system that requires this kind of support, and a Church that could stoop to accept it, must already have seriously departed from the pure and lofty standards of the New Testament. Dean Inge summarizes the whole situation in the following sentence: 'The Catholic theory of the episcopate falls to the ground, because

[1] Brown—*Apostolical Succession*, p. 338.

the first link in the chain, the commission of the bishops by the authority of the apostles, is an obvious myth, which no scholar can any longer defend.'[1]

Another unpleasant but relevant fact, which history thrusts upon us, as we reflect on the story of the Papacy, is that many of the Popes were very different men in character and life from what should be demanded of the successors of Peter, occupying so high and holy an office. It is no satisfaction to recall the stories which abound, as to the moral depravity of one Pope after another; but they cannot be ignored in any fair examination of the theory. The Pope claims to have an apostolic grace, which is shared by no other person. He is, as he says, not only the direct successor of the chief of the Apostles, but he is Christ's special Vicar and Vice-general upon earth. He professes to give a list of all his predecessors; though when called upon to present the names of those who succeeded one another from Peter, for the first hundred and fifty years, he has to resort to the somewhat desperate expedient of foisting upon a credulous people a list badly authenticated. The earliest list of all, dated A.D. 170, strangely enough, did not represent Peter as the first bishop at all! Nor did Irenaeus, (A.D. 181-189), who gives an actual record of a continuous line of bishops, describe Peter as Bishop of Rome.[2]

[1] *Protestantism*, p. 15

[2] Cadoux-*Catholicism and Christianity*, p. 449.

But even if the links were not so uncertain we cannot understand how the devout Roman Catholic can be at ease, as he becomes acquainted with the sort of men that have from time to time, formed a link in this all important and holy chain. Here are a few glimpses.

John XII was elected Pope in 955, when he was eighteen years of age, and from the beginning he plunged into the most unbridled sensuality, and turned the palace into a place of riot and debauchery. Dr Brown says, 'The imperial agents told the Emperor how the Pope had squandered towns and estates upon his mistresses, and how that no respectable person dared any longer to make a pilgrimage to Rome for fear of falling into his power.'[1] We should have thought that a channel which, by divine providence was ordained to convey the grace that is all-important, would have been safeguarded from such horrible impurity as is indicated in this record. But it is not the story of one sinner only. Moral enormities simply abound in the history of the Popes.

For thirty-six years in the fourteenth century, there were two separate and opposing Popes, one at Rome and the other at Avignon. The hatred existing between these rivals as well as the bitterness of the respective factions is too well known to need illustration. Though they cursed and condemned one another, both were Popes, and Rome had to settle which was true and which false,

[1] *Apostolical Succession*, p. 348. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

There was indeed, a moment in 1044, when there were not two Popes but three. Benedict IX and his family were so intolerably wicked, that the furious people drove him out, and elected Sylvester in his place. Benedict returned at the instance of his party, but he had again to abdicate. With commercial acuteness, however, he unblushingly sold the Papacy to Gregory VI. And these three Popes, for a brief time resided in Rome together.

Some of the Popes were soldiers with no pretensions to be saints. Julius II, for example (1503-13), had no false modesty in making his preferences known. When Michael Angelo modelled his statue, and suggested that the left hand might hold a book, Julius would have none of it. 'Nay,' he said, 'give me a sword, for I am no scholar.' It is Bishop Creighton who says of Pius II (1458-64) that he lived among dissolute companions, and was as dissolute as the worst of them. To this may be added the words of Dean Inge, 'The Papacy at the end of the fifteenth, and the beginning of the sixteenth century, was the open sore of Europe.'[1]

The story of shame and wickedness need not be prolonged, but the proud challenge of the Papacy to-day demands that such facts shall neither be perverted nor suppressed. If there are gradations in the shameful abdication of religion, honour and decency, the most infamous Pope of all was Alexander

[1] *Protestantism*, p. 16.

VI. He and his son, the cardinal, were instruments of every kind of moral depravity imaginable. Lust, rapine, and murder were their daily occupation. Yet Alexander, we are to believe, is one of Peter's successors, whose existence, and standing in the holy Church of Christ, is essential to the precious and peculiar grace mediated through the Papacy! It is enough to state the facts. The truth is that the whole theory, which establishes the Pope, and justifies his claims, was born in obscurity, nursed in pride, and maintained by that morbid passion of the human heart which finds its delight in controlling other men's lives and destinies.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—Examine the passages in which our Lord points out the danger of pride, power and wealth.

2.—Discuss the peril of putting other people right; and illustrate from the history of the Papacy.

3.—Study the Articles on 'Peter' in Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, and note how from the available data, opposite conclusions are drawn as to Peter's visit to Rome.

4.—Look up the history of the early Church in Rome.

5.—Read the account of 'The Decretals of Isidore,' as told by Dr. Cadoux in his great book, *Catholicism and Christianity*, p. 482; and by Dr. John Brown in his *Apostolic Succession*, p. 337–9.

6.—If further information is sought concerning Irenaeus, read Cadoux, pp. 449–452, Dr. Hort's *Anti-Nicene Fathers*, pp. 66–75, and the relevant passages in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*.

Chapter IV

RAYS OF LIGHT

It is not possible in so small a volume, to trace in detail the story of the Church during the centuries that lie between the emergence of priest and pope, and the supreme moment when Luther nailed his theses to the door of the Church at Wittenberg. But to appreciate the Reformation, it is necessary to glance at certain events and characters, that we may see how strangely good and evil are mingled in the troubled and surprising record.

The desire to make out a strong and vivid case, might easily lead us to ignore, or even suppress, what is a vital and integral part of the whole story. But if we really care for truth, no satisfaction can be derived from such a method. It is truth that prevails in the end, not force and fury ; not even prejudice.

Human nature and history alike, are full of surprises. Many a leader in the Church, during the centuries we are considering, appears at one moment as an inflexible soldier or a remorseless partisan, and a little later we recognize in him a devout and humble-minded follower of Christ. Take for example, Cyp-

rian, a bishop of the third century. He laid down theories of the Episcopate, with almost fierce intolerance. As an ecclesiastical statesman he is distinctly unattractive. But all hard thoughts of him vanish when we see him return to Carthage in A.D. 258, to listen to the sentence of his doom. Thus it ran, 'It is decreed that Thascius Cyprianus be executed by the sword.' Cyprian meekly bowed, and responded simply, 'Thanks be to God!'[1]

As it was with Cyprian, so was it with many another. But what is of chief importance for us is that the Church, with all its growth and development, became more and more worldly in outward expression and in its organization. A sentence or two from Harnack's great work puts this very clearly, and with final authority. Speaking of the third century he says, 'The common life of the Church has now its priests, its altar, its sacraments, its holy book and rule of faith, but it no longer possesses the spirit and power.'[2] Again, 'As the proof of the spirit and of power subsided after the beginning of the third century, the extraordinary moral tension also became relaxed, paving the way gradually for a morality which was adapted to a worldly life.'[3]

Many a brave fight was fought to maintain the purity of the faith ; but alongside this struggle, in which giants were often engaged, there was a degrading and insatiable greed

[1] Hort—*The Anti-Nicene Fathers*, p. 114.
[2] *Expansion of Christianity* Vol. I. p. 256.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

for pomp and power. Popes met kings and frequently subdued them. No one, for example, can forget the story of the struggle between Pope Gregory VII, better known as Hildebrand, and the Emperor of Germany, Henry IV, who had been excommunicated.

For three snowy days in January, 1077, the Pope kept the Emperor barefoot, and in penitent's garb, before he would release him from excommunication. It was a supreme, if carnal satisfaction to the Pope, and his satellites, to master kings and control their armies. It never seems to have occurred to them to subject their programme to the scrutiny of the great Founder of the Church, whose servants they professed to be.

The story of the centuries, from the founding of the Papacy, up to the Reformation, may be summarized as, first of all, the conquest of the Roman world, or at any rate the attainment of a position which involved general recognition, and a homage more or less unreal. The surrender of Constantine to Christianity (A.D. 323), and the establishment of the Christian religion by State decree, was an event of great importance, though as we look at Constantine himself, and become familiar with all that took place, the decision is not an exhilarating one to contemplate. The next stage is the founding of the Church among the German nations. Meanwhile the Papacy continued to grow, until it acquired almost complete control over Western Europe. All the while a decline in moral sternness and spiritual elevation is obvious

enough. Corruption was far too general, and intolerable wickedness was a commonplace among the inner circle of Church rulers.

Yet the lamp of faith burned brightly in many a quiet place. There were Churches in which the love of God was chanted by saints aflame with holy joy and zeal. Great preachers and teachers constantly stirred the hearts and instructed the minds of the illiterate. In the darkest days there were devout souls 'waiting for the consolation of Israel.' We may be sure that the unhallowed striving and moral decrepitude of leaders in the Church, were more frequently checked and counterbalanced by loyal souls, than historians have always been ready to recognize. Here and there were groups of holy men and women, who did not strive nor cry, but nurtured a fervent piety, and found immediate access to the throne of grace. The violence of a Borgia furnishes piquant material for a writer with a fondness for the picturesque, who sees hardly anything of note in men illustrious only for holy living.

Among such was Francis of Assisi, (1182-1226), who ' claimed as his spouse the poverty of Jesus Christ, whose love kindled by the love of the crucified overflowed the souls of men, to all that the Crucified had made, beasts of the fields, and birds of the air.'[1]

Thomas à Kempis (*c.* 1380-1471) might practise and publish his devotions, to the nurture of souls in all coming days, but he lived within a circle which had no love for wordly fame,

[1] Dean Church: *The Christian Character*, p. 127.

and supplied no material for the purveyor of vivid folly or thoughtless power. Dr. John Tauler (?–1361), preached sermons in the fourteenth century, which feed the heart and mind to this day; but his name is not in the list of those who figured in courts, and fought with kings. Not only were these men deeply pious, but they recognized the piety of common people. In one of his sermons Tauler says, 'I know a man who has the closest walk with God of any I ever saw, and who has been all his life a husbandman—for more than forty years—and is so still.'[1] There always have been husbandmen of this sort, since Christ called men from their daily tasks to be His disciples; they have always been more numerous than we know, and they have been the salt of the earth.

But the depths to which the Church gradually sank was a source of distress to those who knew the facts, and could not forbear comparing it with the ideal Church of Christ, 'without spot or wrinkle.' Hence the story of the centuries, which immediately precede the Reformation, is studded thickly with the pleas and protests of men who tried continually to free the Church from the snares of sinful passion, and the control of faithless rulers.

John Stuart Mill, who, with all his innate scepticism, saw the significance of moral and spiritual values more clearly than most men, has invited us to reflect on the very different story that might have been written

[1] Tauler's *Life and Sermons*, p. 371.

'had the Christian faith been adopted as the religion of the Empire under the auspices of Marcus Aurelius instead of those of Constantine.'[1] No one can do so without sharing in his disappointment and sadness. He goes on to say, 'The Reformation broke out at least twenty times before Luther, and was put down. Arnold of Brescia was put down; Fra Dolcino was put down; Savonarola was put down; the Albigeois were put down; the Vaudois were put down; the Lollards were put down; the Hussites were put down,'[2] These words serve the double purpose of reciting facts in history, and illustrating the existence of a power 'spurting and suppressed,' which resided within the Church and could not be kept under much longer.

A word or two should be said concerning some of these forerunners of the Reformation. Arnold of Brescia (1100–55) was a pupil of the famous Abelard. He knew that he was not making it safe for himself, when he urged the clergy to give back all property and secular honours to the State, and return to the simplicity enjoined in the Gospels. It was his fate to be harried from one country to another, and finally hanged in Rome at the instance of both Pope and Emperor.

Another herald of the Reformation, who perished in the strife, was John Huss, of Bohemia (1369–1415). He refused to give up preaching, and refused also to refrain from his condemnation of the sale of indul-

[1] *Liberty*, p. 15. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

gences. He was in exile for two years, but was induced at last to come to Constance. The Emperor had given him the assurance of a safe conduct, but the fury of a relentless Church was too much for the Emperor, and his pledge went for nothing. When sentence of death was read to Huss, with a noble serenity he turned and looked at the king, whose blushes testified to his shame and faithlessness. Huss was burned, but his name is alive for evermore; and his witness was not in vain. In the category of holy martyrs he has a foremost place.

One other we must glance at, and in some respects he was the most remarkable of all who knocked in vain at the doors of the Vatican, and besought Pope and cardinals to give heed to 'true religion and undefiled.' Savonarola (1452–98) is one of those heroes, the story of whose life and death has been told a thousand times. Historians and novelists have vied with one another to do this fearless herald justice. But this he could not obtain while he lived. His crime was, that he denounced the evils of his age, and showed no mercy in his exposure of evil-doers. As a preacher he seems to have bordered latterly almost on frenzy. From the pulpit of St. Mark's, in Florence, he thundered against the rulers of the Church with almost terrifying eloquence, and, in tears and agony, he besought the people to repent, and thus avoid impending doom. His words were like whips, and his sermons almost glowed with the fire of Sinai, in their sense of inevitable

judgement. He exposed the infamies of Pope Innocent VIII; and when he was asked to desist his reply was, 'Entreat him in my name to repent his errors, for calamities from on high hang over him and his family.' Savonarola was burned at the stake, but Florence has long since recognized that of all her sons, none has more heroically and faithfully exposed her folly, and urged her to pay regard to 'righteousness, self-control, and judgement to come.'

There are other men and movements, too, which cannot be described here, but enough has been said to make clear the cardinal facts, that the Church had fallen very low, and that all the while there were brave men with vision and faith who ceased not to warn the faithless 'night and day with tears.' Among these were many, who faced, without wavering, the horrors of gallows, sword and fire, rather than be silent. The Reformation was overdue, forerunners had testified with no uncertainty, and the day was now about to dawn.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—For the story of Constantine read Walker's *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 108–119, and the two famous chapters, XVII and XVIII of Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

2.—Make the acquaintance of *The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi.*

3.—In connexion with John Tauler, read the section on 'The German Mystics' in Walker, *Ibid.* pp. 279–83.

4.—Numerous 'lives' of Savonarola are available, but it is still worth while to read in connexion therewith, George Eliot's *Romola.*

Chapter V

THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND

Before we pass on to deal with the Reformation, it will be well to give a brief account of the Church in our own country, so that we may the better appreciate what took place, when the storm which burst in Germany, spread to our own shores.

If we go back almost to the earliest days of our own island history, we see the Britons, peering in fearful wonder from behind the trees at the advance of the disciplined and resolute armies of Rome. These came first in 55 B.C., at the instance of Julius Caesar. We know that, later, missionaries came as well as soldiers; or perhaps it was first of all, that many of the soldiers were also missionaries; and during the four and a half centuries of Roman occupation, the gospel was preached and received in many parts of the island. When the last of the legions were withdrawn in A.D. 410 the missionaries remained.

We can even now catch the echoes of songs which ascended from the hearts of Celtic people, long before Augustine and his monks came to England. And, perhaps, justice has

never been done to the fearless and ardent Christians who first told the wonderful news of the Gospel to the half savage people. We have no data upon which to base an adequate tribute.

The Romans withdrew for reasons which are well known. Nearly two centuries later, however, we have a vivid glimpse of life in Rome and its consequences for Britain. Some fair-haired slaves were in the market place, who had been taken from our own country. Gregory, afterwards bishop of the Roman See, saw these, and asked who they were. 'They are Angles,' was the reply. 'Not Angles, but Angels,' he said; and when he was told the name of their king was Aella, he said with emphasis, which in such a man was never trivial, 'Alleluia shall be sung in Aella's land.'

Gregory it was, who sent Augustine in 597, with forty monks to claim the land for Christ. Augustine did not evangelize England, but he did convert Kent to such an extent as to make it 'the solid base for the subsequent spread of Christianity over the island.'[1]

It would be a long and mingled story, at times depressing, and at times exhilarating, were we to de cribe the fortunes of the Church through the centuries that follow. Perhaps the man whose name would have the most conspicuous place in such annals, would be that of Theodore of Tarsus (669–

[1] Trevelyan—*History of England*, p. 58.

90). When well over seventy years of age, he organized the work with such foresight and completeness that all England was brought under the dominion of Canterbury. His programme included the creation of bishoprics, each with a definite territory, and all subject to the supervision of Canterbury.[1] This scheme, among other advantages, prepared the way for the parish system, so that even before the Norman Conquest, most parishes had a Church, and with the Church, a priest who was not a monk.

But we shall look with little success for a Church with such a sense of its high calling as to renounce the alien aid of the world. The priests, who rose to distinction in the Church, knew too well how to flatter or exploit the State and appeal effectively to the secular arm. Over against that, however, should be set the fact that the poor parish priest was largely immune from such a snare, and frequently preserved a sweet and pervasive piety.

The monasteries grew and flourished; but the monks were by no means distinguished for 'plain living and high thinking.' Asceticism, and unjustified self-denial, are always apt to avenge themselves somewhat violently.

The claims of the Church were advanced with unscrupulous boldness by Hildebrand (1073-85), in this country and elsewhere. His policy was adopted and applied by the Norman Conquerors; and in turn the leaders

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

of the Church became the high officials of the state. 'Some of them were merely fighting barons dressed up as Churchmen.'[1]

Edward the Confessor (1004-66), built an Abbey at Westminster; and in the thirteenth century Henry III (1216-72), pulled it down, and in honour of Edward built the Westminster Abbey we know to-day. The mediæval Church was subject to the Pope; but the king dealt with the Pope as with an equal, and often a rival. Meanwhile the successor of Peter was far more concerned about lordship over the nations, than the salvation of the people, or the growth of the Kingdom of God.

As we have pointed out in another chapter, there were always saints who kept the fires burning. The organization, after all, was only the shell, and spiritual life is not contingent upon leadership. Within the Church there was a central glow, that sometimes shot a flame into visibility, to the surprise or the dismay of spiritual delinquents, and those who were in authority.

The coming of the friars was not an unmixed blessing, but while the monks ate, drank, and chanted hymns within the limits of the monasteries, the friars went here and there carrying religion to the common people.[2] The fact, however, that later Wycliffe (1320-84) disliked the friars, almost as much as the secular clergy hated them, is evidence of some serious defect in their life and work.

The very mention of Wycliffe's name

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 105. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

almost compels us to disregard all others, and fix our attention upon one who has a shining place among ardent reformers and fearless pioneers. It is one of the fascinations of history to watch the emergence of a great man in a crisis. Amid struggle and confusion, when no one quite knows what to do, a great figure appears, and by sheer force of genius, he comes to the fore and cuts a path through the jungle. It was so with Wycliffe. While rival popes were contending, and princes were seeking to subordinate the Church to aid them in their cruel programmes, the people remained untaught, and for the most part lived and died in superstition and paganism. The corruption had become so general, that there seemed nothing to do but to acquiesce. Only a giant could oppose so formidable a combination of evil agencies with success. But such a giant was the Yorkshire man, John Wycliffe; he pierced the hollow claims of priestism and popery, and he saw that transubstantiation was the fortress of both. So long as the priest was acknowledged to be in possession of a secret endowment, whereby he could convert bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, so long would he be able to command the unquestioning obedience of the people, and inflict whatever tyranny he chose. Wycliffe, with his clear eyes, saw that transubstantiation was a fiction, and a most desolating fiction. He saw, too, that it gave the priest his coveted and abused supremacy.

With a courage that never failed him, he openly denounced the doctrine, and to that extent defied the Church. It is no wonder that subsequent generations have affectionately spoken of him as the 'morning star of the Reformation.' He was indeed more than that, as John Milton saw clearly enough when he wrote his *Areopagitica*. 'And had it not been,' says our great poet, 'the obstinate perverseness of our prelates against the divine and admirable spirit of Wycliffe, to suppress him as a schismatic and innovator, perhaps neither the Bohemian Huss and Jerome, no, nor the name of Luther and Calvin had ever been known, the glory of reforming our neighbours had been completely ours.'

It is difficult to say which was Wycliffe's greater achievement, the translation of the Scriptures into the tongue of the people, or the sending forth of his 'poor preachers.' Either of these would have sufficed to invest a human life with the splendour of a great achievement. While scholars discuss the question whether it was Wycliffe or Chaucer who wrought the more valiantly for the enrichment, beauty, and permanence of our language, we are concerned with this translation of the Bible, as a gift to the nation, and a means whereby the common people came to know something of the word of God. It was a translation which, though derived from the Vulgate, was one to which all subsequent translators have acknowledged their indebtedness.

Before there was a printing press, he and

those whose services he was able to command, had 'done into English' the Book of books. And so eager were the people to get the Bible in a language they understood, that many copies of it were soon in circulation. Portions of it were freely broadcasted. Many a touching story is told of people who gave what they could ill afford to spare, that they might be the happy possessors of some small part of this treasure. A load of hay was a small price to pay for a few chapters.[1]

But Wycliffe did more than translate and distribute the Scriptures; he sent forth preachers by two and two, whose charge it was to preach the Gospel in simple speech so that all could understand. In spite of ridicule and opposition, Wycliffe never wavered. He was so magnetic, or perhaps we should say, he was so apostolic, that he could draw to his side men of talent and scholarship. His 'poor preachers' were many of them Oxford men, and they took up the task assigned to them with enthusiasm. They came to be known as 'Lollards'; and some idea of the way in which they penetrated the dark parts of the country, and won the hearts of the people, may be gathered from an admittedly exaggerated statement some years later, to the effect that 'every second man you met was a Lollard.'[2]

Wycliffe passed away, but his work remained. The movement that he initiated

[1] Muir, *Our Grand Old Bible*, p. 26.
[2] Trevelyan, *History of England*, p. 250.

continued in spite of fierce persecution and martyrdom. In the days of Henry IV and V (1399-1422) the persecution was relentless, for these monarchs sought the favour of the Church to make themselves secure.[1] Driven underground, the movement could not be destroyed.

It is impossible to say to what extent the Lollards prepared the way for the Reformation, but it is using language of moderation, to speak of Wycliffe as its 'Morning Star,' and to credit the Lollards with an evangelism, which planted many a seed in secret places, that sprang up into vigour and beauty, as the sunshine of Protestantism fell upon it in generous warmth and fructifying power.

Botanists know of hedgerows, where rare plants can be found, and when they are asked to explain the presence of these 'aliens' they point to a ruined abbey not far away. The monks, they say, cultivated these plants centuries ago, and though the monks have long since gone, and their buildings have crumbled into a heap of ruins, the flowers they loved still appear on the earth, and testify to old and sunny days. So is it with the truth. The Lollards were flung into prison, and burnt at the stake ; the Bible was chained, and the people doomed to remain in darkness for awhile, but the plants had been rooted here and there, and persisted in irrepressible vigour, so that when the Reformation took place,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

England was not swept into a movement entirely new, for which she was totally unprepared. She responded rather to an appeal which had familiar tones, and which seemed to be the revival of memories almost blotted out. It was Wycliffe and his preachers who did more than any other human agency to prepare the way for the full Protestant Gospel in England.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—For a good account of early Christianity in England see Trevelyan's *History of England*, Book I, Chapter IV.

2.—On the origin of the parish system see *The Growth of Church Institutions*, by Dr. Edward Hatch, Chapter V.

3.—Study the story of the English Bible in (*a*) *How we got our Bible*, by J. Paterson Smith; (*b*) *Our Grand Old Bible*, by William Muir, M.A.; (*c*) *The Romance of the English Bible*, by Carey Bonner.

4.—Read Milton's *Areopagitica* again and again, for Dr. Fairbairn says, ' In these days when I wish to brace my spirit to feel the strength of a great conviction . . . where do I so gladly go, as to the *Areopagitica* of John Milton? . . . the grandest plea for freedom of thought which the English language, or any other language contains.—*Religion in History*, p. 229.

5.—Read what Chaucer, who is supposed to have had Wycliffe in mind, says in describing his good parson, *Canterbury Tales*, the ' Prologue.'

6.—What resemblances are there between Wycliffe's methods and John Wesley's?

Chapter VI

THE QUICKENING BREATH OF LEARNING

As we approach the epoch-making event of the Reformation, we become aware of forces strangely unlike each other, but possessing this vital factor in common, that they all prepare the way for a spiritual revolution. We have already pointed out, that, in our own and other countries, great men were raised up with a prophetic insight and message, who deplored alike the spiritual declension of their age ; and alike they brought to light truths which had for centuries been overlaid. Again and again such heralds and forerunners had been silenced by persecution and martyrdom ; but no one who proclaims a great truth lives in vain, and we can see now that the heroes who calmly faced imprisonment and death, helped to liberate those spiritual forces which were to enrich the whole world.

The Church was on good terms with the world, and, as it is necessary to remember, if we are to appreciate the apparent violence of Luther, the leaders of the Church were often guilty of a complete betrayal of the essentials of Christianity. To illustrate this once more, we may quote a passage from a

recently published work: 'The avarice of the clergy was often as offensive as that of their masters at Rome. All wills had to be proved before them, and they charged heavy fees for the probate. When a dead body was taken through a parish, the priest received mortuary fees. They were shameless pluralists, holding as many as ten or twenty ecclesiastical appointments, and paying underlings to do their duties while they intrigued at the Court for more lucrative posts. Cardinal Wolsey at one time held the bishoprics of Tournai and Lincoln, and the Archbishopric of York, and drew the revenues of all three Sees. None of these offices were conferred upon him for his piety, but as a reward for service rendered to the State. Luther says, 'There may be found many a courtling at Rome, who alone holds twenty-two cures, seven priories and forty-four prebends.' "[1]

The Church and State joined hands to crush the prophet. Sir John Oldcastle, who had been the leader of the Lollards and their comforter, was harried from one end of the land to the other by the bishops. When Henry V found that, to secure himself, he must have their support, he yielded to the clamour, and the brave old Englishman was brought from hiding in Wales in 1417, and burned with unspeakable cruelty. 'He was suspended from a gallows and he was slowly burnt to death.'[2]

[1] A. C. Underwood, *The Continental Reformation*, p. 10.
[2] *Ency. Brit.*, XVII., p. 753.

It would be too much to say of such a time that 'truth goes marching on'; it did not so much 'march' as creep and persist.

It is always recognized that the Renaissance did much to lay those foundations of learning upon which the superstructure of Protestantism was ultimately to be raised. In its simplest phase, the Renaissance was the revival of the knowledge of Greek, though, of course, far more than that was involved. On every hand there was the sense of expansion. No one could appreciate it at that time; and perhaps even now, we have only a feeble idea of the power introduced in the middle of the fifteenth century, when printing by means of movable type was invented. Again, who can say what a revolution in man's outlook was effected as Copernicus (1473-1543) opened the door upon the universe, and taught men to look for a system which was far greater and grander than that of a self-contained world with stars dancing in attendance, and a sun whose sole business it was to be a beneficent source of light and warmth?

Columbus, too, made his mighty contribution to the enlargement of men's thought, when he returned from his great adventure in 1492, and told the story of a long and perilous journey which ended in the discovery of a new world.

But the event, which did more than all else to quicken the minds of men, followed upon the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. The advent of the Turk was the

signal for the scholar to depart. Men who could not fight, and had no wish to do so, gathered their possessions together, and fled to kindlier company. The greatest of all these possessions was their familiarity with the language and the intellectual treasures of Greece. It requires but little imagination to appreciate the impression made in Italy, when these scholars brought their learning to a land that was pulsating already with intellectual eagerness. In the days of the Medici, Italy was enriched by the genius of Michael Angelo, and perhaps too faithfully represented by the coarse standards of Machiavelli. But those scholars who sought the hospitality of Florence, could follow the eagle flights of Plato, in the very words he wrote ; they could reproduce the exquisite numbers of Sophocles, the tragic grandeur of Euripides, and the masterly analyses of Aristotle. It is no wonder that learned men from all Western Europe flocked across the Alps to see, and hear, and learn. Learning had a new life; it was the beginning of an intellectual springtime. The Church outwardly remained in the spell of mediæval bigotry, and was paralysed by corruption, but beneath the exterior there was a life that must at last assert itself.

It is well that we should glance at one or two more of the outstanding leaders, whose originality and vision paved the way for a better day.

Foremost among these was our own countryman, John Colet (1466-1519). He was a scholar

both by training and instinct. His father was wealthy enough to give him all the advantages of education and travel ; and he had the aptitudes to profit by both. He visited Paris and Italy, and finally returned, in 1497, to take orders, and settle at Oxford. Eight years later he became Dean of St. Paul's. It was while there he did the work which entitles him to our deepest gratitude. His preaching fascinated the citizens ; they had heard nothing like it before. Discarding the crabbed methods of mediaevalism, he took his Greek Testament, and expounded the Epistles of Paul in such a fashion, that the congregation listened to him with rapt wonder. The people discovered that Paul was intelligible, and withal, a man with hopes and fears like their own. Above all, the great apostle to the Gentiles, was seen to have had the most amazing knowledge of the deep things of God.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Colet saw with noon-day clearness that auricular confessions, and the celibacy of the clergy, not only received no support from the Scriptures, but were the source of untold mischief in the Church. He would have subscribed to the words of the late Professor Gwatkin, 'If celibacy was supposed to lift the priest above the mire of the world, auricular confession plunged him back again into it, for the priest's ear became the sink of the parish.'[1]

The burden which Colet bore, as he looked out upon the condition of things in his day, is

[1] *Ency. of Relig. Ethics*, Vol. X., p. 610.

indicated by such words of his as these. 'The Popes are wickedly distilling poison. O Jesus Christ, wash for us, not our feet only, but also our hands and our head, otherwise our disordered Church cannot be far from death.'[1]

It was in harmony with all we know of him, that when his father left him a considerable fortune, he devoted it to the foundation of St. Paul's School. And to this school, a headmaster was appointed named Lilly, whose name has been pleasantly, or unpleasantly, associated with a grammar right down to our own day.

His contemporary, Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), looked at, in the light of his character and virtues, places all future generations under obligation. His scathing criticism of the religious orders of his day, and the popular superstitions which were interwoven with these, caused many an ecclesiastic to writhe. He did not divine the significance and the value of Protestantism, but by his immortal book, *The Utopia*, he unwittingly prepared the way for Luther and his fellow workers. He described a world where 'social injustice, religious intolerance, and political tyranny,' gave place to 'equality, brotherhood, and freedom.' The warm winds of truth blew throughout the land by means of his genius, and on a scale too generous to be measured by any instrument we possess. He tore the fetters of superstition from the figure of Truth, and forecasted reforms, which have

[1] Seebohm—*The Era of the Prot. Revolution*, p. 78.

been slowly wrought from century to century. He went to the scaffold because he would not repudiate the Papal authority at the order of Henry VIII, and who can withhold admiration for his refusal to adjust his spiritual convictions at the bidding of such a king?

Another, who has an indisputable right to a place among those who prepared the way for the approaching crisis, was the Dutch Erasmus (1466-1536). He came to England when he was about thirty years of age, and was the friend both of Colet and More. He was not built of the stuff of which heroes are made. He poured the torrent of his inimitable sarcasm upon the follies and superstitions of his day, but he was not fitted by nature or grace to be a reformer. 'He was in his own age the apostle of common sense and of religion,' yet there is no saying more familiar than that of the Pope, who described him as ' the odious bird who laid the egg which Luther hatched.' The way in which he so directly affected the current of thought and feeling in his day, was by his brilliant ridicule of folly, and by the Greek Testament which he gave the world in 1516. It may be, as scholars contend, that the latter has no title to be considered as a work of learning or scholarship' but 'its influence upon opinion was profound and durable.'[1]

Dr. Marcus Dods says of him : 'He stands between the ancient and the modern world as a kind of gentleman usher, selecting with

[1] *Ency Brit.*, Vol. VIII., p. 517.

unerring instinct such writers as were worthy of immortality.'[1] By the side of the mighty Luther, he is rather a wavering and compromising figure. He had no heart for revolution, and was too prone to play for safety. We recall, however, that in his famous book, *The Praise of Folly*, he poked fun at indulgences, and at the ignorance, self indulgence, and bigotry of the monks. Dr. Lindsay says, 'The book is the most severe attack on the mediaeval Church that had up to that time been made; it was meant to be so.'[2] And Luther, in reproaching the great scholar for lack of courage, admitted that 'the whole world must confess that it is through you there has been such a revival of letters, through which people have got access to the Bible in its purity, and that you possess great and glorious talents for which we must ever be grateful.'[3] The devotion of Erasmus to learning, his exposure of the errors of his day, and his friendship with Colet and More, entitle him to a place among those who prepared a highway in the wilderness for the coming of the Protestant hosts.

We have tarried longer than at first was judged necessary, in speaking of the conditions which existed at the beginning of the Reformation, and seeking to appreciate the services of those who went forth 'weeping, bearing precious seed.' But only by a clear

[1] *Erasmus and other Essays.*
[2] *The Reformation*, Vol. I., p. 181.
[3] Underwood, *The Continental Reformation*, p. 18.

knowledge of those conditions, and those characters, can we truly understand the methods of Martin Luther, or the great Reformation which he was the instrument under God in bringing to pass. We now turn to the study of the Great Reformer, and the principles which he enunciated. It should prove a soul-stirring study, for it was nothing less than the triumph of truth and righteousness, after centuries of superstition and base betrayal. We shall not find our hero a perfect man, but that he was both great and good, only the prejudiced and obdurately relentless Catholic, Roman or Anglican, will deny.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—Make a list of the agencies which obviously aided the Reformation.

2.—For an excellent account of ' The New Learning ' see Green's *A Short History of the English People*, Chapter VI., Section IV.

3.—To appreciate the intellectual supremacy of Greece, consult *The Legacy of Greece*, and especially Prof. Gilbert Murray's Essay therein, on ' The Value of Greece to the Future of the World.'

4.—Compare the three men, John Colet, Sir Thomas More, and Erasmus.

5.—Read Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, and J. A. Froude's very readable volume, *Life and Letters of Erasmus*.

II

THE REFORMATION

Chapter VII

LUTHER'S PROTEST

While many men in various countries had, under God, been preparing the way for the spiritual upheaval of the sixteenth century, the final and effective thrust was given by Martin Luther. We propose, therefore, in the present chapter, to give some account of the manner in which, without foreknowledge or predetermination on his part, he achieved the stupendous task of stirring Germany into revolt against the organized forces of Rome, and set on foot a movement that has spread to the ends of the earth.

Born at Eisleben in 1483, he was the son of a miner. His father had strong desires that the boy should be educated; and the mother, who was 'a stern matron,' had a similar ambition. Luther, therefore, is another instance of a boy introduced to the world of learning through the worthy ambition, and cheerful self-sacrifice of poor parents.

The father knew too much of the monks to look with tolerance in the direction of the Church, and sent his boy to school that he might be educated as a lawyer. While at

school, Luther appears to have endured more than the usual share of boyish persecution and privation. From this, however, he escaped when he left Eisenach for the University of Erfurt.

It was apparent to any one with open eyes, that this rough peasant lad was endowed with sovereign gifts of mind and heart. He mastered whole provinces of learning with ease, for his was an intellect capable of laying hold of, and controlling half a dozen different problems at once. The father watched the development of his son with a father's pride; a pride, however, which ultimately gave place to anger and indignation. For Luther resolved not to continue his study of the law; and, in spite of his parents' predilections and protests, he turned to the Church.

He was deeply religious, in fact with him nothing else mattered. He had that overwhelming sense of the spiritual which subordinates all else to its claims. He could not dismiss sin as an illusion. His conscience was troubled, and his great quest was a genuine peace of soul.

He gave up his legal studies and entered an Augustinian convent. There he gave himself to the urgent and supreme question of right relations with God. He took his Plautus and Virgil with him, into the monastery, so it is said, but gladly left all the rest outside as worthless baggage. By striving and prayer he attained to a quietness he had not known before. He studied the great mystics with

unrelenting eagerness, but he could not be said to have the experience of a 'peace that passeth understanding.'

It was while he was thus perplexed that he was called unexpectedly to take a professorship in the New University of Wittenberg. In 1508 he became a director of Biblical Theology, and his lectures on the Psalms and St. Paul's Epistles were as invigorating as they were unconventional. In 1511 he was sent to Rome, a privilege for which he had often longed, but did not expect to realize. The experience, however, was to inflict upon him a bitter disappointment, and a rude awakening.

We may judge the spirit in which he went to Rome, from such an incident as the following: When within sight of the city he knelt and cried, 'I greet thee, Holy Rome, thrice holy from the blood of the martyrs which has been shed in thee.' What he actually found in Rome, however, was little trace of holy living, but abundant evidence of decadence and the debasement of religion. Here, where he expected to find the source and centre of a great and holy organization, fragrant with piety, he found a Pope who was little more than a cultured pagan, and monks who found occasion for ribaldry in the very simplicity of the people to whom they administered the Sacraments. Here among these custodians of religion, he found incredible profanity. The shock was great, and it may be said that Luther never recovered his confidence in a Church that could tolerate, and

even beget, such corruption. He went to Rome a mediaeval theologian, but came away with a new sense of need and bewilderment. He began to inquire for some safe place in which to anchor, and while returning from Rome he found it in the New Testament. The words of Paul, which teach that we are 'justified by faith,' flashed upon him with the force and beauty of a revelation. He accepted the truth, and was at rest. He saw that a seeking soul might find direct and immediate access to Christ, and, by faith, be restored to happy relationships with God.

He returned to Wittenberg, and those who were privileged to hear him preach and lecture were conscious of a change in his tone, his teaching, and even his countenance. But the Reformation was not yet born. The crisis was to be precipitated by an event which makes it one of the remarkable moments in history.

Pope Leo X, who was desirous of raising a large sum of money, resolved upon the issue of an Indulgence. The money was needed for the decoration of the great church of St. Peter's. It appears, however, that the Pope's worldly wisdom suggested that he would be more likely to replenish his coffers, if he announced that he needed money to prosecute a war against the Turks; and if such an appeal would be more effective, the Pope knew nothing of any moral code that forbade its adoption.

Indulgences were not a new device; but, new or old, they are as reprehensible as any plan that ever Rome exploited. An Indulgence was nothing more or less than a piece of paper or a ticket, stamped by papal authority, which guaranteed, upon the payment of a suitable sum of money, to secure immediate forgiveness of sins, and even to liberate distressed souls in purgatory. There was a definite tariff, the study of which is illuminating.

Here is a typical form of Indulgence: 'By the authority of Christ, by that of His Apostles Peter and Paul and of the Holy Pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, I do absolve you, first from all manner of ecclesiastical censures, in whatever manner they have been incurred, and then from all your sins, transgressions, and excesses how enormous soever they may be. . . . When you die the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the delights of Paradise opened.'[1]

Armed in this fashion, the emissaries of the Pope started out upon their campaign. One of the most ardent and unscrupulous of these was Johann Tetzel, a Dominican monk, whose fortune it was to invade Germany. Tetzel was an unblushing buffoon, and plied his wares with unqualified effrontery. He sent forerunners into towns and villages dressed like clowns, to announce his arrival. When the monk himself came, the people looked in

[1] Quoted in *The Continental Reformation*, Underwood, p. 24.

dull amazement at the sight. He had a waggon, with an iron cage on one side, through the bars of which the Indulgence tickets might be seen, and on the other was a metal box with a chink to receive the money. Tetzel sold his Indulgences in the manner of a modern cheap jack. The people were assured that as soon as the money chinked in the bottom of the strong box, the purchaser would secure either the release of friends from purgatory, or his own personal exemption from the consequences of his sins, even sins which had not yet been committed. It is permissible to hope that the story is true which tells of a duke who paid the willing salesman the price of a pardon for a thrashing which he was about to inflict upon his enemy; and that when the transaction was completed, Tetzel found, to the grief of his body and mind, he himself was the victim.[1]

Luther, who had taken note of Tetzel's activites, was justly indignant, and prevented him from coming into the Province of Saxony. But he could no longer restrain his indignation. He had seen monks, whose morals would hardly pass muster in a company of libertines, ridiculing religion in Rome, and now that Indulgences were hawked about in this shameless fashion he was driven to a definite and unequivocal protest. He wrote down with a fury which was almost inspired, some ninety-five theses, proclaiming in plain

[1] Sir Henry Lunn in *The Christian World Pulpit*, Oct. 26, 1898.

and vigorous language the scandals he saw, and the truths of which he had become assured. He then marched off and nailed these to the door of the Church at Wittenberg. There his fellow citizens might read in their own tongue the truth as Luther saw it. Without fear or favour he uttered his soul. The theses by no means contain the fullness of the Protestant faith, they do not question even the right of Rome to issue Indulgences; they do, however, dispute the right to extend these Indulgences to purgatory. The true treasure of the Church, he declared, was God's forgiving grace. Repentance was not an act, but a life-long habit of mind.[1] There were some high explosives in these theses; but Luther did not know, nor did he anticipate, how resounding and far-reaching would be the repercussions.

He was too bold to flinch, and was fortified by the conviction that what he said was the truth. He soon found himself the most discussed, and the most intensely hated man of his day. Rome was furious, nothing so insolent had ever been witnessed. The Pope and Cardinals took counsel together, and it was resolved to expunge the theses and bring Luther into instant and abject submission. He should be made to understand that he had flouted divine authority, and was in grave danger of excommunication. Meanwhile, the news spread. People had only one topic, it was the story of Luther's outrage, and the con-

[1] Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, p. 341.

sequences which must surely follow. But on every hand he had supporters. The response showed that he had only said what many felt. He was the manifest and chosen instrument in publishing the good news which no other person of his day had had the courage to proclaim.

We may affirm now that Protestantism was born, though no one was yet known as a 'Protestant.' And here it is well to say that the word, as originally used of the reformers, did not imply dissent, as it so often has since. The context is more precisely suggested by recalling a line of Shakespeare, 'I have a wife whom I protest I love.' The 'Protestation' was first of all an assertion of liberty, an affirmation of truths believed and rights claimed, rather than a repudiation of some form of discredited belief.[1]

Luther had far to go, fresh discoveries to make, and many trials to endure; but when such a man, in circumstances such as these, is roused and fairly started, his momentum is incalculable. It is easier to stop a glacier than to repeal spiritual forces so liberated and impelled. Luther's judgement was more than once at fault. If Protestantism had to stand on Luther, as the Church is held to stand on Peter, then it would be on foundations so precarious that its future might well be questioned. He lacked some qualities that an ideal reformer must possess, but he was a great-hearted man, a religious genius, and

[1] Cf. Dean Inge's *Protestantism*, p. 3.

possessed of a leonine courage. He saw for himself, and probed to the centre of truth, refusing to be fettered by any external authority. He claimed freedom to pursue the truth and to expound it. And what he saw he could tell others in homely and unforgettable speech and writings. Obviously he was the man for such a moment.

We shall touch more than once, in later chapters, upon his career; but here it may be well to pause, that we may look round and take account of the whole situation.

The Church, which had refused to tolerate disobedience or criticism and had so decidedly crushed opposition again and again, was now defied by a German monk. At first it seemed simply ludicrous, but that phase soon passed. There was occasion for serious concern, if not dismay. Rome resolved to rise up in the majesty of her unequalled power, and smite this insolent rebel to the earth, as she had smitten so many before. What could an unarmed monk do, when he was opposed by a Church that could put into motion the most effective and relentless machine to crush rebellion ever seen? Rome had never refrained from using the sword, and at the same time reinforcing the symbols of death, by invoking the penalties of eternity. It seemed, therefore, that the protest must prove to be a mere splutter, which would be subdued by the colossal calm of assured authority. Luther, it might well have been predicted, would perish in circumstances more ignominous than those

which attended the death of Huss, Jerome, and Savonarola.

Events, however, did not justify any such prediction. Luther did not guard his life as a first concern. He continued to expound and amplify the principles which were embodied in his theses.

But it was not Luther alone that had to be taken into account. The harvest was now to be reaped from the seed sown in tears and blood for generations past. No great prophet has ever lived in vain. Truth was seen with greater clearness, and found to be more beautiful than ever. The story of the Gospel had been told in divers portions, and in different tongues through all the centuries. The principles of evangelical truth had been enunciated again and again; and the reward of effort and sacrifice so frequently as it seemed in vain, was now to be reaped. The response was on a scale which can be explained only by the past failure of the Church, and the deep-seated desire in the heart of man for the wonderful story of the Grace of God revealed in the life and death of Christ. Northern Europe was roused by the clarion call, and in a very few months Rome had lost her hold, once and for all, upon a large part of the world, a hold which she is at present so frantically trying to recapture in our own country. Macaulay says of a few years later, 'In England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Livonia, Prussia, Saxony, Hesse, Wurtenburg, the Palatine, in several cantons of Switzerland, in the Northern

Netherlands, the Reformation had completely triumphed.[1] Rome had slept too long.

Protestantism was rooted firmly, and the truth to which it testifies, as well as the beneficent effects of its influence, were apparent on every hand. Rome can never recover what was then lost; and seeing the depraved morals that sheltered in her precincts, and the false teaching which received her blessing, we rejoice that it is so. Protestantism has proved to be, not simply an organization that has focussed and embodied the principles of New Testament teaching, but has been an instrument used by God, to make Rome deeply ashamed of sins, for which at first, she confessed no regret; and has, at the same time, goaded her to an earnestness and concern for spiritual reality, which had not been apparent for several centuries.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—For a brief and excellent account of Luther, see Prof. T. M. Lindsay's Article on Luther in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

2.—D'Aubigne in his *History of the Reformation*, gives a good description of Luther's ninety-five theses.

3.—Enumerate other instances of Luther's courage.

4.—Macaulay, in his Essays on Ranke's *History of the Popes*, gives a good account of Luther's preaching against the Indulgences.

[1] Essay on Ranke's *History of the Popes*.

5.—Lindsay's *The Reformation* in a single volume (' Handbooks for Bible Class and Private Students ') is excellent, and his *History of the Reformation* in two volumes, is perhaps the best English work on the subject.

6.—Students will always keep at hand Dr. Cecil John Cadoux's recent book, *Catholicism and Christianity*.

Chapter VIII

THE ANGRY CHURCH

It could not be expected that the Church would make no attempt to defend herself against the attack of Luther, which had been taken so seriously by the nation. In whatever other respect the Church failed, she could always rouse herself with an impressive dignity to deal with rebels and heretics. Hence, when the protest of Luther came to be common talk, and it was seen that many were listening to what he had to say, the time had come for action.

The first move made by the Church, was to summon Luther to Rome. Had he gone, who can say what might have happened? He did not go, however, for he had a wise, strong, and faithful friend in Duke Frederick, the Elector. Instead of Rome, the Duke arranged that Luther should meet the papal representative, Cardinal Cazetan, in Augsburg. The Cardinal came, and was lacking in none of the arts and graces of the Church. He suavely agreed with much of what Luther said. The Indulgences, he admitted, were wrong. An agreement was arrived at; Luther

and his critics were to keep silent. Let the nine days' wonder die out: the fires would soon languish if they were not fanned by public discussion. Luther agreed; but the compact was not kept on the other side. John Eck, a fiery defender of the Church, would not remain silent. He attacked the theses, and challenged a friend of Luther's to public disputation.

Luther heard of this, and recognized that he was at liberty now to speak the word that was as a fire in his bones. If Rome's representatives went on to denounce, he was at liberty to defend. It was not long, therefore, before a public debate took place between Luther and Eck. It was as inconclusive as such debates usually are. Luther, who was never mealy-mouthed, did not hesitate to speak some home truths to the wriggling Eck. He told him what he had experienced in his own soul, and the discoveries he had made in the New Testament. But what was far more stinging, was the public recital of what he had seen in Rome, and an exposure of the disgraceful commerce in Indulgences. He poured into the astonished ears of Eck, the truth that the only true priesthood was the priesthood of all believers. He argued that each Christian must judge according to his own conscience, as it was enlightened by the Word of God and His Holy Spirit.

Eck sought to parry this revolutionary doctrine, by declaring that if there was no Pope, there could be no Church. To this,

Luther replied that the Greek Church had existed without a Pope, and that Eck was the first to call that community no Church. Eck found Luther was armed with too many guns for his defence, and he strode off in high dudgeon. He sought to give a little dignity to his exit by saying, 'If you refuse to abide by the Church, I refuse to dispute.'[1]

Rome had now to consider how Luther, who could not be vanquished by argument, might otherwise be silenced. Eck pressed for a Papal Bull condemning him, but this only helped to increase the excitement, so that very soon a large area was in a state of white heat.

Luther knew now that he had nothing to expect from Rome, except persecution, and possibly death. He saw also, with greater clearness than ever, the truths in all their significance and implication, which had for so long been struggling to birth in his heart and mind. He, therefore, set to work to write pamphlets for general distribution. He was a master in the art of forcible writing. It is to be questioned if a greater pamphleteer has ever lived. His style was simple and picturesque, so that every one could understand what he meant. In a tract entitled *To the Nobility of the German Nation*, he pointed out that the Church had appropriated the land and houses of the nation, and asked why it was the Germans allowed 300,000 florins to be sent every year, out of their own

[1] Lindsay, *Reformation*, p. 9.

poor country, to Rome. Only two months later, he issued another tract in Latin, to which he gave the title of *Babylonish Captivity of the Church.* In this he handled questions of the highest theological import, and subjected the claim and teaching of the Church to a merciless scrutiny. There were, he said, only two Sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, with a possible place for penance as a return to baptism. The other Roman Sacraments, he rejected as having no standing in Scripture.[1]

This was altogether too much for the Roman Church, and a Papal Bull was issued with great solemnity on July 15, 1520. It charged Luther with holding the opinions of Huss, and accordingly condemned him. The Bull was posted freely in Germany; and the students, whose sympathies were with Luther, derived a gleeful satisfaction in tearing it down. When at last it reached Luther, he acted with decisive recklessness. He was of the wrong material to submit to mere browbeating, and he saw that the authority of the Pope was based on a fiction. He called the document 'the execrable Bull of Antichrist.' Heading a procession of students on the tenth of December, he marched to the market place and there set fire, with scornful defiance, both to the Bull, and a copy of the Canon Law. This was final. The news spread like wildfire. A large part of Germany had revolted from Rome; and what would happen next was a subject of

[1] Walker—*A History of the Christian Church*, p. 345.

discussion among sober statesmen and irresponsible gossips alike.

Luther continued to prosecute his work with amazing vigour. He wrote tract after tract, dedicating his wonderful gifts of clear thinking and vivid speech, to the public exposure of the moral obliquities of Rome, and the falsehoods which were embodied in her beliefs. Nor was he lacking in positive teaching. He had rediscovered the New Testament and evangelical truth. He knew exactly how to reach the public ear. One of his expedients has an almost uncannily modern aspect. He employed the artist Louis Cronach, to make a series of woodcuts, while he supplied the explanations, when such were needed. But few words were required to expound the significance of a picture of our Lord on the one side washing the feet of His disciples, and on the other, the Pope holding out his toe to be kissed. In another of his pictures, Christ was represented as bearing the Cross, while a companion picture showed the Pope riding in state. Christ was seen driving out the money changers in the Temple, and the Pope by the side, gloating over piles of money. Such relentless pictures told their story in terms which admitted of no answer.

It was now the turn of the Emperor of Germany to intervene. Charles V (1500-58) has been described as the ablest and most powerful monarch of the sixteenth century. He was disturbed, even distressed, for two reasons: he had no sympathy with

Luther's views and he was greatly concerned lest the movement should in any way further disintegrate an empire which he was specially anxious to consolidate. Germany, after all, was only a series of States, and had little or no political unity at that time. The Emperor himself was elected by some seven princes, and to secure the unity which was his supreme aim, it was necessary to have a united Church as well as a united State. When, therefore, the time came for him to hold a great Council of the Empire, called a Diet, he found it necessary to deal with Luther, for it was he who was the source of the mischief; and Rome, as may be imagined, left no stone unturned to incite the Emperor to severe measures.

A herald was sent to bring Luther to the Diet at Worms, and a safe conduct was given. Luther went with a reasonable expectation of going to meet his death. He knew the methods of the Church and he knew, too, how uncalculatingly he had provoked her wrath. But now that his whole soul was stirred, there was no turning back. When someone said to him that Duke George of Saxony was lying in wait for him, he replied 'I'll go if it rains Duke Georges!' And when another assured him that the devil would lay hold of him in some way, he answered with scornful serenity, 'I would go, if there were as many devils in Worms, as there are tiles on the housetops.' His journey was almost a triumphal progress; the people felt that he

was a hero, and knew that he stood for something true and vital.

The Diet was a gathering which might well have subdued even the boisterous courage of Luther. There were the Emperor and his brother Ferdinand, the Archduke of Austria; six Electors were there also, twenty-eight dukes, thirty bishops and a number of lesser nobility, making two hundred in all. When Luther entered, he was at once challenged by skilful representatives of a power that seldom menaced in vain. A pile of books lay on the table, and he was demanded to say if they were his productions. At first he failed in the confidence and fearlessness of speech which afterwards distinguished his conduct. He asked for time, and was given till the next day. The respite was sufficient, he recovered his composure, and was in full posession once more of a full-blooded vocabulary. 'The Emperor demands a plain answer,' said the malignant Eck. 'If you will have a plain answer,' said Luther, 'I will give you one, without horns or teeth.' After baiting him for hour after hour, the conclusion was reached that Luther had charged the Council of the Church with error. This horrified the faithful. 'Do you actually say that a Council can have erred?' they asked. 'Yes,' said Luther, 'Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me, God. Amen.' This is one of the great moments in history. Had Luther quailed or wavered then, it might very well have been that once more the movement would have been crushed, and the

chains of superstition and tyranny fastened afresh upon the hearts and minds of the people.

But Luther did not falter. The papal representatives could do no other than clamour for his death. The sentence passed upon him was less than death. It was ordered that he should be given a safe conduct for twenty-one days and at the end of that time, be an outlaw.[1] That meant that after three weeks in his own country, no one could give food, drink or shelter to the outlaw, and any one meeting with him, was under obligation to hand him over to the authorities, when he would most certainly be put to death.

Frederick of Saxony knew well enough the danger, and resolved that Luther should be saved. He arranged that a band of soldiers should seize Luther on his way home, and whisk him off to the castle at Wartburg where he might safely stay in hiding. There he lived for ten months, and cultivated a prudent obscurity by the aid of a beard, and the dress of a knight. But his achievement during those ten months was one which did as much as the single act of any man could do to win the gratitude and admiration of posterity. He set to work at once to translate the Bible into German. Books became available for the purpose. There were outsiders who knew where he was and could help him in his great undertaking. The difficulties were formidable. He complained that it was

[1] Lindsay, *Reformation*, p. 16.

almost impossible to make the Hebrew prophets talk German! But if genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains, Luther very decisively attested his genius. He corresponded with any one likely to help him rightly to translate a passage. A butcher was able to help him with parts of Leviticus, and a jeweller was a friend when he came to the Book of Revelation.

But a greater difficulty still was that German was rather a group of dialects than a language. It was here that Luther triumphed. He gave the nation the Bible, and at the same time a language which was approved by all. What Chaucer and Wycliffe did for the English language Luther did for the German; and the whole nation, from that day, has been welded into a unity, and fused as it had never been before.

While Luther was in the Wartburg, his friends were not silent, nor were his books neglected. On every hand the teaching was reaffirmed. The doctrines he had recovered and set forth with luminous conviction, were expounded by other preachers. Here and there a fanatic hindered, and no one was immune from mistakes; but the central truths were neither smothered nor superseded. After a time Luther was able to return to his native town, without regard to the Emperor's sentence, or the fulminations of the Pope. He had the ear of the people as he began to thunder once more. The five false Sacraments, the abuses of the mass, saint worship and papal supremacy

were all examined and denounced. The Reformation spread with amazing rapidity, and very soon England began to react to the message.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—See notes at the end of the preceding Chapter.

2.—Frederick appointed to the University of Wittenberg which he had founded, Luther and Melanchthon as professors. Melanchthon (1497–1560) deserves careful study.

3.—For fuller information on the Greek Church, consult *The Church and the Eastern Empire*, by H. F. Tozer, M.A., in 'Epochs of Church History' series; and for the teaching and belief of that Church to-day see *Faith and Order*, a report of the Lausanne Conference, pp. 18–23; 67–78; 106–115, and 258–63.

4.—For the avarice of Church and Clergy, see Underwood's *The Continental Reformation*, p. 7–11.

5.—A Study should be made of Luther's contribution to hymnology, and the publication by him of the first German Hymn-Book.

6.—For a description of Canon Law, see Walker's *History of the Christian Church*, p. 292.

Chapter IX

THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

We cannot follow up the study of the Reformation in other lands, for our purpose is not primarily to write the story of that great movement, but rather to show the significance and content of the faith that gave it birth.

Luther had no idea to what an extent his witness would influence the nations, nor did he at that time, dream for a moment that his stand would result in a definite and final break with Rome. The story of his later life, if it could be told here, would be the story of a great man, struggling with dauntless courage to capture the truth, and be faithful to it. He was not always right, and indeed in some matters, as for example in his attitude to the Peasants' War, he was definitely and tragically wrong. His relationships with Zwingli do not show him to be always wise, and certainly not always tolerant. But with all those defects, which his enemies have always known how to exaggerate, he stands out as one of the heroes of the world. He was, as we have said, a religious genius. His insight, when interpreting the Scriptures,

proves that. He penetrated to their meaning with such clearness in almost innumerable instances, that his judgements are final. It was the fearless study of the Scriptures, too, which gave him his message, and enriched him with those fixed principles that gave to his life a pillar-like quality in the midst of quicksands. His influence has been, and continues to be, simply immeasurable.

But when we turn to England, we become aware at once of a difference in the atmosphere. The conditions are quite unlike those of any other country. The young king, Henry VIII, (1509-47), was at first so strongly opposed to Luther, that he wrote a book in defence of the Pope. For this, he was acclaimed, and designated by Rome, as 'Defender of the Faith.'

The day, however, was near when this ally of the Pope would become his bitter enemy. It was Henry's quarrel with the Pope which gave free play to the principles of the Reformation in this country; but the nature of that quarrel complicated and tainted it from the first. Henry's opposition to the Pope had nothing whatever to do with Protestantism, nor even with religion. He never became a Protestant; and few Protestants would care to side with him against the Pope. He is one of the men of whom it is unpleasant even to think. He was coarse, vulgar, sensuous, and cruel. Religion, with such a man, is simply a power to be used for personal and mean ends. To contemplate such a king as Head

of the Church, is to receive the same kind of moral shock as when we recall the moral character of some of the Popes.

We know something of the story of his many marriages. He wanted to marry Anne Boleyn ; but how could he ? His first wife, Catherine, was still alive. Perhaps the Pope would help him. No sooner had this thought occurred to him, than he translated it into a decision. The Pope, he resolved, should prepare the way for him, by declaring his marriage with Catherine invalid. She had been the wife of his deceased brother Arthur, and it was submitted, therefore, that Henry's marriage with her must have been invalid. But, however willing the Pope might be to oblige Henry, he dare not. The Emperor, Charles V, was the nephew of Catherine ; and to stir up the indignation of Charles was a risk no Pope could run. Charles had, indeed, just sacked Rome, and to rouse this lion again was to invite further humiliation.

But Henry was a Tudor ; and that meant that he was headstrong, and in the habit of having his way. He found another method, therefore, of procuring the divorce, even though it meant renouncing the Pope. The 'Defender of the Faith' defended it no longer ; he had other aims, and he achieved them. He secured the divorce, and Anne Boleyn, who had for some time been his mistress, became his wife. She was not to enjoy her husband's favour for more than a few months. Perhaps this woman, the wife of one of the most

lustful of men, was herself faithless; at any rate, she was sent to the scaffold in a grotesque display of wounded righteousness, by her husband.

This was certainly an unpropitious beginning for Protestantism in England. To compare it with the sharp, stern purity of Luther's protest, is to realize how hopelessly it was mixed with elements which stained its purity and hindered its progress. When Henry had thus broken with Rome, he called to his aid men of fine sympathies who were endowed with some measure of spiritual insight. But it was not possible, in the nature of things, for the developments to be entirely satisfactory. Archbishop Cranmer (1489-1556) for example, who in the end so nobly atoned for his vacillations, was all too ready to wink at Henry's duplicity. He helped in supplying arguments with which to support the King's decisions. He assented to Henry's monstrous claim to be the Head of the Church, while Convocation, too, 'acknowledged with a sigh, that Henry was Head of the Church of England, with the scrupulous addition, so far as the law of Christ allows.'[1] That such an ungainly figure, devoid of the least gleam of spiritual perception, should pose as the successor of the Pope, was more menacing than hopeful for the Reformation in England. The fact is, Protestantism cannot be said to have won a place in England at all during Henry's reign. It was in spite of him, rather than because of

[1] Trevelyan—*History of England*, p. 304.

him, that the English Church began to welcome a Protestant atmosphere. Cranmer was too much of a courtier to be a good Archbishop, but when he took up his pen he was 'like a man inspired.'[1] The prayers of the Anglican Church, which have been a spiritual fount, and the daily joy of countless numbers, are due more to Cranmer the mystical genius, than to any other person.

The clergy were very largely ignorant, but there were men like Latimer (1490-1555) whose heart, voice, and intellect, were powerful auxiliaries to the growing movement. England has never quite accorded to Hugh Latimer the place he deserves among her pathfinders and heroes. Possessing unrivalled powers of terse and homely speech, he attacked the evils of his day with absolute fearlessness, and proclaimed with the glow of the prophet, the central truths of the Gospel. When later he perished at the stake, there was visible in his countenance the triumph of one who had already transcended the pains and miseries of this earthly life. 'Be of good cheer,' he said to Ridley, his fellow sufferer, 'we shall this day light such a candle in England as shall never again be put out.' This prophetic word, ringing forth from the midst of flames, has been abundantly fulfilled.

Henry's interest in religion expressed itself among other activities, in putting down the monasteries. A good case could be made out for their destruction no doubt. They had

[1] *Ibid.*, 313.

become, for the most part, nests of indolence; but Henry is a reformer to whom we grudge any place among the pioneers of Protestantism. The work of pulling down the monasteries might have been entrusted to a better man, and its profits devoted to nobler ends. What should have been given to education, was lavished upon country squires, who, naturally, had, thereafter, no desire to see the monks again. The king pursued his way, and his 'egoism became a disease.'[1] Neither his physical form, nor his moral character are pleasant to recall, and when at last he was summoned to a higher tribunal, the Church in this country had been severed from Rome, but had acquired only the rudiments of the Protestant faith.

Edward (1547-53) who succeeded his father, leaned towards Protestantism, but had few obvious qualfications for the supreme Headship of the Church. In less than six years, he too, had gone, and Mary (1553-58) his half sister, came to the throne. By this time the Prayer Book had been issued in much the same form as we have always known it. The murder of the gentle and blameless Lady Jane Grey is a black spot in the reign of Mary, but one blacker still, and for which she was more directly responsible, was the martyrdom of three hundred Protestants in four years. John Foxe, (1517-87) in his *Book of Martyrs*, told the story of these cruelties in a way which strengthened Protestant convictions.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

For two hundred years his book held a place with the Bible; it was often on the Church desk, and more generally in the homes of the people. Mary's life was brief and bitter. She married Philip of Spain, but was denied both the comfort of a husband's affection, and the happiness of motherhood. 'Calais' may have been written on her heart, as she said it was, but the murder of men like Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer, has made it difficult for posterity to extend to her either pity or forgiveness.

Thus the forces, which were operating in the interests of Protestantism fluctuated, and it was reserved for Elizabeth, (1558-1603) with a minimum of spiritual fitness, to give England a definite and permanent place among the Protestant nations. In her love of power, her determination to rule, and quickness to interpret public opinion, she was indeed the daughter of Henry VIII. The last of the Tudors, she was by no means the least. She could scold or flatter; with soldiers she could exhibit the courage of the most daring; with statesmen she disclosed a mind of astonishing acuteness; when great men offered her their adulation, she could be coy and coquettish. Among a crowd she could be the charming princess; with a group of courtiers, when there were signs of a reluctant obedience, she could rouse herself to fury and smite with scorpions. Bishops wilted under her caustic tongue. She approached questions concerning the Church with an imperious will, and with

the heart of a prudent pagan. She resolved upon the course most likely to make her own position secure. She demanded homage as the Head of the Church, however unattractive such a Head may have been to men of spiritual instincts and sympathies.

In 1559, Parliament declared definitely for the Reformation by passing the Act of Supremacy. Thus was abolished once and for all, the power of the Pope in England. But the wholesome measure, was followed quickly by another, far less satisfactory. The Act of Uniformity made the Prayer Book the only legal form of worship. Thus England had torn off the bonds of Romanism, but suffered the imposition of another tyranny.

The Reformation in our own country was effected, not so much by the clergy, as by the laymen; a characteristic which has perhaps persisted to our own day. The people had Protestant sympathies; it was the half-hearted support of the clergy of that time that accounts for much which earnest Protestants deplore in the Anglican Church to-day. The rise of Noncomformity was inevitable. The spirit of freedom in Christ could not be kept in fetters such as a worldly monarch like Elizabeth would forge. In Scotland, John Knox (1505–72) was declaring for spiritual freedom, and preaching with a power and passion that sent echoes ringing from one end of the island to the other.

Elizabeth tuned her bishops and dictated terms. She was, without doubt, a convinced

supporter of the Reformation; but the conceptions which sustained this support, were not derived from a study of the New Testament, or the history of the Christian Church. She was queen of England and she recognized that a seemly respect should be paid to religious rule and observance. She saw also that to admit the right of the Pope to the claims he made, was to jeopardize her own power. It is, therefore, in vain we try to disengage the tangled motives of an extraordinary woman, in such an exalted position, at a time when so many issues were at stake, and so many institutions in the melting pot. She had to decide, at times, where a knowledge of theology and a spiritual experience were both required, and for such a knowledge she could only substitute swift intuitions, fierce prejudices, and hereditary kingcraft.

The religious compact was a compromise after all. England was severed from Rome; but the separation was neither caused, nor supported by conceptions of adequate loftiness. With a King or Queen as Head of the Church, and a Parliament made up, as Parliaments always are, of men of various religions, or of none, the necessity remained for a more clearly defined attitude to the great principles which had been expounded by Luther and his fellow reformers. Meanwhile, Rome ruined whatever chances she had of recovering the loyalty of England, by the shameful and unpardonable part she played in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, in France, in

1572. The Church that smiled upon this crime and even inspired it, stained her hands with blood that centuries cannot wash away. A cruel mob of Catholics was let loose upon the simple and helpless Huguenots. Murder upon an appalling scale, with every accompaniment of unpitying derision, provided Pope Gregory and the Cardinals with an occasion for public rejoicing. They walked to the Church, giving thanks for this horribe treachery of their fellow mortals, and Cardinal Orsini was sent to Paris to congratulate the king. The story of this massacre is almost too heart-rending to read; it is almost too outrageous to believe. It is no wonder, therefore, that England definitely hardened against Rome, and that our country decided in its heart never again to acknowledge the control of a Church that could stoop to such a hideous crime.

The Puritans emerge during this period with their strong desire to make a clear sweep of sacerdotal vestments and ritual. Soon after, Robert Browne (1550–1633) began his chequered and clouded career, but though it was not known at the time, he was a sign to his generation. He was the first of the Independents. The work he began, but afterwards to some extent relinquished, was taken up by others. The Free Churches came to birth; it could not be otherwise. Their heroes went to the stake, as religious pioneers have always gone; but Nonconformity was both a logical and a spiritual

necessity. It was the complete expression of the Protestant faith.

The English Church was now composed, partly of sturdy Protestants who desired to go all the way, partly of those who were prepared for half the journey, and partly of those who would not move forward an inch; and this division is still reflected in her life.

Elizabeth died in 1603, and then Scotland parting with her king, inflicted him upon England. It was a sorry gift. James I, who was aptly described as 'the wisest fool in Christendom,' declared, to the surprise of his Presbyterian friends, that if there were no bishop, there would be no king. And having arrived at this conclusion, the whole question was settled as far as he was concerned. The rags of Rome continued to cling to the Anglican Church. It was for the Free Churches to expiate this wrong and claim, on behalf of the Church of Christ, her proper liberty, and the 'crown rights of the Redeemer.'

FURTHER STUDY

1.—Write on Henry VIII as 'Defender of the Faith.'

2.—Students will desire to look into Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Let them read the first part of Book VIII, concerning Ridley and Latimer.

3.—Read Latimer's *Sermons on the Card*, published in various forms to-day.

4.—For a pithy account of Henry VIII, and his relations to the Church and Pope, read Forsyth's

The Charter of the Church, Chapter I. But go on to read the whole of a wonderful little book.

5.—The subject dealt with in this chapter is discussed with exact knowledge and much learning in the chapter entitled, 'The Reformation in England,' in the volume *Continental Protestantism and the English Reformation*, by F. J. Smithen, B.A.

6.—For a vivid description of Elizabeth, see Strachey's *Elizabeth and Essex*.

7.—For a good study of Robert Browne, see Silvester Horne's *A Popular History of the Free Churches*, Chapter II.

8.—The story of the Monasteries, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew, are dealt with in all good books of history that treat of those periods.

III

DOCTRINES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Chapter X

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

The outstanding and basic doctrine of Protestantism is justification by faith. There are other doctrines, of no slight importance, which form a part of the Protestant heritage, such as the priesthood of all believers, the right of private judgement, and the final authority of Holy Scripture; but the doctrine of justification by faith is fundamental. Dr. Forsyth goes so far as to say, that it is not so much a doctrine of Christianity, as its very nature and substance.[1] We agree; it cannot be isolated and regarded as a single element of the Christian creed, it is rather a foundation upon which the other vital doctrines are contingent. The priesthood of the believer, for example, would be inconceivable if there were no direct access of the soul to God. Let faith be excluded, and works substituted, and at once the intermediary between man and God has standing ground, and an exclusive priesthood is inevitable. In the same way, the contention for the right of private judgement, is simply

[1] *Rome, Reform and Reaction*, p. 152.

futile if the individual cannot approach God without an order of priests, or experience the blessedness of salvation without the offices and officers of the Church.

It is not an enrichment of the pulpit which excludes the phrase 'justification by faith' from our vocabulary. For some reason, the words appear to have lost their music for the modern ear; but it is fatal if the content of the term is allowed to fall into neglect also; and it may very well be that the most effective way of reviving an appreciation of the content is to revive also the use of the words.

The term confessedly has a legal flavour, and possibly this accounts to some extent why it has so little charm for us. But it is difficult to say why relationships and transactions of the soul, between man and God, which must be so largely expressed through metaphor, should not be represented at times by figures drawn from the existence and usages of law.

To be justified in the general sense and use of the term, means that harmonious and stable relationships have been re-established between two parties formerly estranged. In some way, or by some means, the one person, who was held to be liable to penalty or rebuke, has secured such advantages, as place him on equal and happy relationships with the other person. It is, therefore, perfectly natural and almost unavoidable, that we should use such a term when the

relationships between God and man are seriously discussed. A definition may appropriately be quoted from Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*: 'To justify means to set right, or to put on a right footing one whose relation, either in consequence of misunderstanding or misrepresentation, or because of misconduct, has been what it should not be.'[1]

It was a situation of this kind in the life of the soul which led to the adoption of the term in religious literature. God, we say, is holy and righteous. He can never deviate from what is right and just. The question, therefore, that must arise in the heart of sinful man, is, 'How a sinner can stand unabashed and unafraid in His holy presence?' How can one whose guilt is admitted, be placed where he has no fear of a righteous and inexorable law? Not even the love of God, deep and eternal, as we know it to be, can supersede the law in such a way as to dismiss its obligations and demands upon the soul.

The supreme achievement of Martin Luther was his rediscovery of the doctrine of justification by faith. It was a discovery which grew out of spiritual distress and extremity. He had tried all that the Church prescribed, and all that an agony of earnestness could suggest; but he did not find peace. He had sought relief in penance, in self-inflicted pain, in renunciation of pleasure, and in

[1] D. W. Simon, Vol. II., p. 826.

ceaseless vigil; but he was still like a wandering bird flung out upon the dark and stormy skies of midnight. Dr. Lindsay says, 'He had found a whole Bible and read it diligently, but it did not bring him peace. The feeling of universal sinfulness, and of his own, was burnt into him, both by his dogmatic studies, and by his reading of the Scripture. He lived a life of the severest mortification, and invented continually new forms of penance; and all the while, heart and head alike, told him that outward acts would never banish sin. "I tormented myself to death," he said, "to make my peace with God, but I was in darkness, and found it not."'

It was after such a struggle that Luther made one of those discoveries which, when once they are made, surprise us most of all that they have been so long obscured. As we have seen[1] he was returning from Rome disillusioned, perplexed and desperate. The Church, as he had seen it in the holy city, had shattered his dreams and blasted his hopes. Then it was that the words of the Apostle Paul, 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. v, 1), shone out with such beauty and clearness as though they had been inscribed on the heavens. The effect upon him, was as though someone had plucked off chains that had fettered his hands and feet. He had found the truth, and the truth had made him free.

[1] p. 74.

The Reformation then, fundamentally, was a return to the teaching of the New Testament. At a single bound, Luther shot back across the centuries. Ignoring the inventions of priestcraft, he took his stand where all was safe and final. Luther's theology was, like that of the Apostle Paul, an interpretation of experience. He had known helplessness through sin, and then he had passed into an experience of life, liberty and joy, which were the consequence of a simple faith on his part, and of response in life and mercy on the part of God. Relationships had been created by faith, between Christ and the penitent soul. This justification by faith was first an experience, and then a creed.

It is possible that this great doctrine as we have sought to express it, may appear to be too simple, for there is an innate and persistent belief in most of us that what is simple cannot be both true and adequate. Something, we think, must have escaped our definition. It may serve to reassure the reader, therefore, if we quote some words by two eminent men, who, living fifty years apart, have both expounded the doctrine of justification by faith, in words strangely alike in their simplicity and noble emotion. Dr. Dale, lecturing at Exeter Hall, in 1874, said, 'Come home to God and come at once; and as soon as you come, the Father you have forgotten, will throw His arms around you and tell you that there is still a place

for you in the fair mansions of the heavenly city, and that in His own heart your place has never been lost—transform this into a doctrine and you have justification by faith.'[1]

Dr. H. R. Mackintosh, in a volume of intellectual power and spiritual sensitiveness which give it unusual value, says, in a lecture delivered in 1927, 'In a word, Jesus led the sinful to trust the pardoning love of God. And what is this in essence but justification by faith? That doctrine is a simple declaration to men in view of Jesus, that at once and without waiting to be better, they may, by faith, have God Himself for Saviour and Friend. Come home to God, and come now, and you will find that, at your coming, there is joy in the presence of the angels. This is the new word of Jesus, and when St. Paul spoke of justifying faith, it was this word he echoed.'[2]

No one can help wondering, since justification by faith is so precious and so simple, how it was that it was ever lost or neglected in the preaching of the Church, and in the beliefs of those who formulated the Church's theology. Whatever may have been the reason for it, there can be no doubt that the doctrine was smothered very early. Dr. Mackintosh, in the book from which we have just quoted, points out that there was 'the virtual disappearance from early Catholic religion of something that the

[1] *Protestantism; Its Ultimate Principles*, p. 83.
[2] *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, p. 108.

mediaeval Church never succeeded in recovering, viz. the conviction that God freely pardons the sinful if they will but trust His love in Christ.'[1] As soon as we appreciate this tragic fact in the history of the Church, we cease to wonder that hard men won a place in its Councils, and that worldliness, with its cruel and icy hand, paralysed, or drove beneath the surface, the finest qualities in spiritual life.

It is but a step from the loss of this belief to the falsehood which was adopted as its substitute, namely, the value and necessity of human merit. This belief furnished a priesthood at once with some justification for its elaborate apparatus. Confessions, the mass, penance and the like, are the stock-in-trade of an order which professes to speak authoritatively for God, and to assess the value of the works wrought by simple people, who have no resources by which to resist the priestly decrees. To quote Dr. Mackintosh once more, as early as Tertullian (*c.* A.D. 200), it was taught 'that baptism gives the penitent forgiveness for previous offences, and takes him, bound, on pain of eternal loss, to give him the reward of eternal life. . . . The theologians of Alexandria show in this, inability to appreciate the truth that a merciful God justifies us through faith.'[2] It will come to many readers as a surprise and a perplexity, that such a doctrine should so soon have been overlaid and superseded.

[1] *Ibid.*, *p.* 125. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

But we are bound to say again, that wherever and whenever the priest appears, justification by faith has to fight hard for an existence. That is why it is we cannot look upon much that is happening in Churches, nominally Protestant, in our own country, without sorrow and dismay. The priest professes to be an intermediary between man and God, while justification by faith proclaims that the way is open for any trustful penitent to the feet of the Saviour. The priest claims to possess the awful power to remit the sins of his fellow men, or to fasten them upon the souls of the guilty, with all their fearful consequences, while justification by faith declares that, without human aid, or human authority, the sins of men are remitted, when they kneel as penitents in faith before Him 'who bore our sins in His own body on the tree.' It was the priest, then, who found nothing to attract him in this doctrine, and it was largely through his agency the truth was suppressed.

When, therefore, we look at those dreary centuries, which are commonly called 'The Dark Ages,' we see a system of doctrine which bears little outward resemblance to the manifest teaching of the New Testament, but which presupposes an authority operating through an eclectic group, and setting men free or sending them to purgatory, with frequently no appreciation of the significance of what it is they profess to be doing.

Another reason, however, why justification by faith has so continually been rejected, is because of the heavy demands it makes upon the individual. It has often been ridiculed as providing an easy way to heaven, and one which opens the flood-gates to loose conduct. Recent English writers have not hesitated to speak of it with scorn, and to justify their scorn by attributing to the doctrine a carelessness in moral conduct. They would have us believe that when a priest prescribes mass, penance, beads, and fasting, to those who confess such of their sins as they choose, the road is difficult and the religion is hard. But, as a matter of fact, this is completely to misunderstand the inwardness and incidence of justification by faith. To follow the rules laid down by the priest, as any one can see, is by no means very exacting. Attendance at mass, the recital of certain prayers, the surrender of a part of one's income, is an easy yoke, and a very light burden, compared with the ceaseless demands made upon the soul of one who has come into conscious, personal and saving relationships with Christ, for such a faith means nothing less than the entire surrender of the soul to her Divine Lord. The harmonious relationships which are established by faith, are sustained by faith; and such a faith exacts a daily surrender to God, and a searching review of the soul in His holy presence. From this attitude of the soul there is no discharge. It is a faith which

lays the whole life, all its days, and all its minutes, under bond. The love subsisting between the forgiven soul and God, commandeers the heart, the soul, the mind and the strength. Over against this, Roman Catholicism is the religion of the natural man; its rules are laid down for spiritual weaklings, and its consequences upon the life, both of individuals and of nations, are such as are calculated to deprive them of a fearless independence, and a robust vitality; and any one who denies that it ever has such an effect, must be strangely indifferent to the obvious facts of history. It may be that, as Protestants, we do mournfully fail to exhibit, in our lives, the full fruitage of such a faith, but the power makes the highest attainment possible. 'The just shall live by faith;' and 'without faith it is impossible to please God.'

The issue of the Reformation presents its challenge again to-day. We have to face the age-long alternatives, justification by faith, or works. If we listen to the Romish Church and adopt the latter, we turn our back upon the New Testament; we make Paul of no account, and repudiate the heritage so nobly recovered at the birth of the Protestant Church.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—Work out the thought as fully as possible that the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church is inimical to the doctrine of justification by faith.

2.—Show the importance of faith in the light of our Lord's life and teaching. (See Cairn's *Faith that Rebels*, Chapter VIII.)

3.—For a study of the meaning of faith, see Inge's *Faith and its Psychology*, pages 7–45.

4.—For a study of the doctrine, read Mackintosh's *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, pages 115–132.

5.—Read Wesley's Sermons (1) 'Salvation by Faith,' (2) 'The Righteousness of Faith' in *The Marrow of Methodism*.

Chapter XI

THE BIBLE AND AUTHORITY

We may begin this chapter by quoting the carefully prepared words which express the attitude of an important Protestant Church towards the Holy Scriptures. In the 'Scheme,' as it is called, which provides for the union of the Wesleyan Methodist, the Primitive Methodist, and the United Methodist Churches, there is a passage which deals with this subject. Therein it is declared that 'the doctrines of this Church are based upon the Divine Revelation recorded in the Holy Scriptures.' It goes on to say that 'the Methodist Church acknowledges this revelation as the supreme rule of faith and practice.' Here we have a definitely expressed recognition of the important fact that the true estimate of the Bible is that of, '*the record of a revelation*.' This does not require, therefore, that the Bible shall be accepted as 'verbally inspired,' indeed it presupposes a different view altogether.

Another Church, which recently formulated its doctrines, says of the Old and New Testaments, that they, 'through Divine in-

spiration, contain a revelation of the will of God to man, and furnish a sufficient rule of faith and practice.'[1] Obviously, here again, an interpretation of those Scriptures is assumed to be necessary; and since such interpretation must depend on the light available, it is to be expected that theological expression will vary from century to century.

It is at this point the Roman Catholic Church steps in, with characteristic assurance, and claims to possess the unchanging authority, for which, it says, Protestants vainly seek.

The question of authority is wide and deep, and in this chapter we can deal only with those aspects of it which the limited size, and the general scheme of the volume, dictate; and, even so, only incidentally.

It is remarkable at the outset that the Canon of the New Testament, as it is called, was not settled till after the beginning of the fourth century; and synodically, not till A.D. 691. This, of itself, is proof of the indisputable fact that the Bible is not to be regarded as a book immediately and supernaturally bestowed with a divine imprimatur guaranteeing the accuracy of every detail in one or any particular version. The determination of the books ultimately included, did not depend merely upon their supposed authorship, but partly also upon spiritual intuition. We believe, nevertheless, that the spirit who guides both the Church, and the individual,

[1] *General Rules of The United Methodist Church*, p. 5.

was working in, and upon the minds and hearts of men, when the final decisions were taken.

Within a few centuries after Christ rose from the dead, the Christian Church had not only taken over the Jewish Old Testament Scriptures, which were 'the Bible of Christ,' but had become also the possessor of the New Testament, with which the Old was henceforth to be inseparably joined.

The history of the Church, for several centuries, in relation to the Bible, was in harmony with a good deal else that continues to give the name of 'The Dark Ages' to a prolonged period. The priests were often woefully ignorant; and it is said that in the thirteenth century many of them could hardly read. Martin Luther, as we know, had not even seen a complete Bible when he had reached manhood. What manuscripts there were, could be read by only a few of the learned; but men like Wycliffe and Tyndale in this country; and like-minded pioneers in other countries, had their own souls fired, and were resolved to make the Bible accessible, not only to the rich and learned, but to the servant maid and the plough-boy.

The discovery of printing was more than timely, it was providential. The printing press had furnished the reformers with an auxiliary of which they were not slow to take advantage. The neglected and even unknown Scriptures were brought into the light, and soon the Bible was elevated to

a place in the Protestant Church, such as the Old Testament Scriptures held in the Jewish. In this connexion we may quote the apt words of Prof. W. Robertson Smith. He says, 'The real importance of Luther's work was not that he put the Bible into the hands of the laity, but that he vindicated for the Word a new use, and a living interest, which made it impossible that it should not be read by them.'[1]

Meanwhile the attitude and relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to the Bible remained unchanged. Nor has it greatly changed to this day. In spite of many protests to the contrary, it is still generally true that the priest does not encourage the reading of the Bible. And, except in a particular, and unscholarly version of it, the book is quite forbidden. Of that tolerated version, Dr. Cadoux says it is 'for purposes of study almost useless.'[2] Dr. Horton said in 1898, 'If I chance to speak to a continental Catholic I am always told he must not read the Bible.'[3] This need not be explained entirely, by saying that the priest fears what the student may find in the Bible, though such a reason can certainly not be ruled out.

Another and powerful reason, is the view that the Church is infallible. This makes it unnecessary, and even imprudent, for an ordinary person to begin a fearless and resolute study of the Scriptures. The Church

[1] *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 9.
[2] *Catholicism and Christianity*, p. 281. [3] *England's Danger*, p. 110.

is declared to be the organ of infallibility. She functions through priest and Pope. If that is so, there must be no rival; and the Bible may easily become such a rival; therefore, it must be read with much prudence and reserve; and many times in her history Rome has definitely forbidden its reading altogether. It is too risky for it to be interpreted except by such supernaturally qualified persons as are competent for the task. Thus, in the Council of Trent, it 'was ordained that no one leaning on his own understanding shall dare, wresting Scripture to his own sense, to interpret it contrary to that sense which has been, and is held by the Holy Mother Church, whose province it is to judge concerning the true sense and interpretation of the Scripture.'[1] Even the good Sir Thomas More advocated that the reading of the Bible should be kept under the close control of the Bishops.[2] Briefly, then, the general conduct of the Roman Catholic Church, throughout, has been to warn off the ordinary reader; it is a dangerous book for the people generally. Two supreme authorities cannot be admitted; the Church is one; let care be taken that the Bible does not become another.

Protestantism, on the other hand, welcomed the Bible from the first as the Word of God. Luther was, in some respects, perhaps, too much of a free lance. It could

[1] Salmon—*Infallibility of the Church*, p. 128.
[2] Cadoux Op. cit., 263.

hardly be avoided. A man who had broken so many bonds, would be inclined to rejoice unduly in his freedom, and even to suspect restraints which were wholesome and necessary. He did not hesitate to speak of the Epistle of St. James as 'a right strawy epistle,' and treated Hebrews, Jude and Revelation, as of secondary value. It should be remembered, however, that he also said 'God's Spirit had taught him to regard the Bible as a whole and in every part as absolutely and finally true.'[1] We are not concerned here to demonstrate the consistency of Luther: nor do we grudge such satisfaction as the Roman Catholic has in proving that at times he contradicted himself. What in the main he taught and believed, is obvious enough; he loved and studied the Bible, and drew from it daily inspiration and guidance.

It was his devotion to the Bible which Protestantism adopted; but neither Luther, nor the other great reformers, could have anticipated that the Bible would soon be established in the minds of many people as an authority to which appeal could be made in the same way as the Roman Catholic appealed to the Church. This was the case, however, and for this we have had to pay a heavy penalty. For it follows from such a proposition, that the Bible is entirely free from error. As the inspired word of God, bestowed on man for guidance at all times, it must be not only inspired, but it must be all,

[1] Gray—*Aspects of Protestantism*, p. 83.

and equally inspired, and inspired in such a way as to make every detail immune from error. Even the modern translator must share in this exemption from human infirmity and human limitations. Scholars may carry on a futile argument as to the wisdom of including Ecclesiastes and excluding Ecclesiasticus, but to those whose authority is 'the whole Bible,' such discussions are worse than vain, they are blasphemous. No concession can be made to those who point out that there are instances of the same event being twice recorded, and that the two records are irreconcilable in certain details. Such questions are brushed aside with scorn, or explained by ingenious expediency. Even the Book of Jonah has no value for these advocates, if it is not agreed that the story of the whale is literal history. People who readily accept the story of the Prodigal Son as a parable, contend that nothing of this kind can be admitted in interpreting this little book, which has been aptly described as 'the greatest missionary tract ever written.' The idea of 'a progressive revelation' is dismissed as a fantasy. The logic of such a view resulted in a justification for keeping slaves and burning witches, by appealing to the pages of the Old Testament. It was a denial of the principles of Protestantism when the Bible was substituted for the Church. The fundamentalist it is who is sapping the foundations of Protestantism, while living within its borders. When a

Book, because it is 'the record of a revelation' and unique in its content, its fragrance, and its power, was exalted into a court of appeal to such an extent, that any few words, from any of its parts, were regarded as sufficient to settle all disputes in conduct or in theology, Protestants showed how faint-hearted they were, and how unable to trust to the guidance of God's Spirit in the life of the believer. Without knowing it, perhaps, they were thereby denying the first principles of the Protestant faith. The only way, it was held, in which the Spirit could guide men was by revealing to them the meaning of an obscure passage, or directing the inquirer to a verse in the Bible for the necessary answer. This has been the burden of Protestantism; and to what extent we have been weakened because of it, it is difficult to exaggerate. This, more than anything else, has been a stumbling-block to thousands of intelligent young people. They have heard the truth as taught by science in the secondary school; and then they have come to Church to hear an obsolete and an impossible theory fiercely defended.

The issue is less acute than it was, and patience, good fellowship, and positive teaching, will restore the perspective. It must be conceded, too, that the conservatism of which we speak is not wholly discreditable. There are many good people who still fear that Biblical criticism is prompted largely by a desire to destroy the value of the Bible;

and no one can affirm that every critic has seemed to appreciate the grandeur and the spiritual sublimity of the Book he has so industriously scrutinized. The excellent people, of whom we speak, are sure that if the critic does not aim at destroying the Bible, such must most certainly be the consequence, if he is not resisted. The fundamentalist to-day is something of an anachronism; but in certain aspects he is the lineal descendant of men who had not his means of exploring the value, and enjoying the rich harvest of scholarship in the realm of biblical criticism.

No wiser and more appropriate words in this connexion can be quoted than those of one who suffered as a pioneer. Prof. W. Robertson Smith says, 'Of this, I am sure, that the Bible does speak to the heart of man in words that can only come from God —that no historical search can deprive me of this conviction, or make less precious the Divine utterances that speak straight to the heart. For the language of these words is so clear that no readjustment of their historical setting can conceivably change the substance of them. Historical study may throw a new light on the circumstances in which they were first heard or written. In that there can only be gain. But the plain, central, heart-felt truths that speak for themselves and rest on their own indefeasible worth, will assuredly remain with us.'[1] It is im-

[1] Op. Cit., p. 19.

possible to improve on such a testimony, either in its description of the value and function of criticism, or in the supreme place it accords to the Bible as the Word of God.

Protestants have an authority, but it is no mechanical tribunal, to which appeal may be made in every sort of perplexity as to a Greek oracle. When a fallible Church claims infallibility, it can only command the respect of its adherents by a policy too much resembling bluff, and by methods which result in intellectual suicide. God is free: He works as He will. He can and does speak to His children. The Bible is an instrument by means of which He makes known His will; but that will is spiritually perceived by the spiritually minded. The individual is honoured by God; and human personality is both safeguarded and developed by an authority witnessing as a Spirit to the spirit of men. None love and honour the Bible as do those who, believing it to contain the inspired truth, study it by the help of the same Spirit who has impregnated it with beauty and life. Within its living pages are light and power, available for all those who have eyes to see and hearts to feel. 'The Spirit beareth witness with our Spirit that we are sons of God.' And this same Spirit, operating in human minds, and corporately, through the Church, reveals the inner and imperishable truth which, though not confined to the Bible, is found nowhere else as it is found in the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—There is an admirable chapter on 'Where do Protestants get their Authority?' in Rev. A. Herbert Gray's *Aspects of Protestantism*. The essay in *Foundations* on 'The Principle of Authority' by Prof. A. E. J. Rawlinson, is worth a careful study.

2.—We commend cordially the essay in *Foundations* by Prof. Brook on 'The Bible.'

3.—There are over fifty references to the Bible in the Index of Cadoux's *Catholicism and Christianity;* and all will pay for consulting.

4.—Dr. Horton's fervid little book *England's Danger* though out of print, we believe, may profitably be read.

5.—To get a picture of the Council of Trent, it is worth while reading Froude's Volume *Lectures on the Council of Trent*.

6.—One of the best books recently published, on the subject of this Chapter is *Concerning the Bible*, by Conrad A. Skinner, M.A. See also Dr. E. Griffith-Jones's valuable article in *Peake's Commentary*.

7.—Consult *The People and the Book*, especially pp. 433-67.

Chapter XII

THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGEMENT

There are few subjects upon which there is more confusion of mind than that of the right of the individual to exercise his private and personal judgement in the realm of religion. The fascination of the Roman Church with a large number of people, lies in the escape which she professes to offer from intellectual perplexity. The way in which that Church meets the seeker has been graphically described by Mr. Augustine Birrell. 'The Church of Rome' he says, 'stretches out her arms and seems to say . . . you may see difficulties and you may have doubts. They abound everywhere; you will never get rid of them. But I, and I alone, have never coquetted with the spirit of the age. I, and I alone have never submitted my creed to be overhauled by infidels. Join me; acknowledge my authority; and you need dread no side attack, and fear no charge of inconsistency.'[1]

It is easy to understand the spell which such an offer throws upon the anxious inquirer.

[1] *Obiter Dicta: The Via Media.*

The temptation to seek rest by throwing off life's responsibilites, is very powerful. Who has not felt at times a strong desire to find some surer ground than that upon which we seem to stand? If only someone would say once and for all what is right and what wrong! If only, we could know that there will be no further shocks consequent upon the critical examination of the Scriptures, and that at last we have reached final conclusions! If only we could be sure that science would never again disturb our convictions by a fresh theory! These are the longings of many people who come at last almost to resent the demand for a readjustment of view. Many of them take refuge in obscurantism. They shut the windows, that they may see nothing unpleasant. They turn to the Bible, and substitute it for an infallible Church. Refusing to admit that there is, or can be, any error in a book so variously compiled, and so imperfectly translated, they make it a final court of appeal by turning to any single passage in any part of the volume.

Others, however, turn to Rome, and are welcomed by the priest who breathes assurance and complacency. He advises the seeker, and, indeed, in the end, demands of the convert, that he shall cease these vain quests. 'Leave the Bible,' he says, 'to the Church, which alone can interpret it. You must not trouble about the theories of biblical critics, or the speculations of the scientists. They have been wrong before; they will be wrong again.

Trust yourself to the Church; she abides, and does not change. Others come and go; she is " ever faithful, ever sure." '

This offer is taken by many people at its face value; and neither the hollowness of the claims made, nor the consequences upon the mind and soul of the person who thus surrenders, are adequately considered. The infallibility of the Church is so calmly assumed, that it does not occur to the unsuspecting, to ask if the claims can be established.

It is only within recent years, as we know, that the infallibility of the Pope has been asserted. The story of the way in which this dogma was foisted upon a credulous Church is by no means an exhilarating one; and any one who desires to know the truth about Roman Catholicism, should examine it with careful diligence.

We have pointed out in a previous Chapter[1] how the Papacy grew up, and with what discreditable evidence it was buttressed. But it was not until 1870 that the Pope's doctrinal infallibility was declared. When it became known that this was to be promulgated, it gave the utmost distress to some of the finest minds among Roman Catholics. Cardinal Newman, for example, wrote to the Roman Catholic Bishop Ullathorne, and denounced 'the insolent and aggressive faction' that had pushed the matter forward. He says, 'If it is God's will that the Pope's infallibility be defined, then it is God's will to throw

[1] Ch. III.

back "the times and moments" of that triumph which he has destined for His Kingdom, and I shall feel that I have but to bow my head to His adorable inscrutable Providence.'[1] Lord Acton, who was, without a doubt, the most learned Roman Catholic layman in England, hurried off to Rome, when he heard of the amazing proposal, that he might take whatever part was possible to a layman, in opposing the promulgation of the dogma.[2] But his voice and weight were lost, when he approached the well-fortified Vatican.

The Council that decided on this departure, was made up of over seven hundred men, including 'numerous holders of Italian bishoprics, constituting a large majority of the entire number,' and in 'the list of those who eventually recorded their placets in favour of the new decree scarcely a name of real eminence appears.'[3] Dr. Döllinger, who was the foremost scholar of Catholic Germany, disapproved of the dogma, and was ultimately excommunicated. 'It makes my blood run cold,' Gladstone said four years afterwards, 'to think of *his* being excommunicated.'[4]

It was contended by the Pope, that the dogma was not new, but that the Church, had always held it. To this, Döllinger replied with devastating evidence. When once the dogma had been promulgated, however, there was nothing more to be said. The sons of

[1] Salmon—*Infallibility of the Church*, p. 22.
[2] *Ency. Brit.* XXV., 57.
[3] *Ency. Brit*, XVII., p. 754.
[4] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, Vol. II., p. 389. Cheap Ed.

Rome, except for a protesting section that withdrew and became known as the Old Catholics, meekly accepted the new position; and Newman obediently dedicated his great gifts to the production of an argument which was intended to invest the theory with the dignity of a natural development.

It is not for us to say what has been the effect of this new dogma upon Rome herself; nor do we profess to understand the mental probity of men who can accept a preposterous affirmation when it comes to them in the name of a Church, or a Council, especially a Council composed as was the one which presented the world with this new dogma. Professor Gwatkin, whose knowledge of history and its inner significance, is amply attested in his Gifford Lectures, has spoken with great definiteness. He says, 'An infallible Church is of necessity "irreformable," or, in plain language, incorrigible. . . . An infallible Church must go on setting truth and reason at defiance in intrigues for political supremacy, till she either breaks in pieces, or withers away, or sinks into some gulf of anarchy. Meaner Churches may repent and amend, but for Rome, reform is suicide.'[1]

Our point, however, is that what Rome professes to offer in her Church and her's alone, is a tribunal competent to settle every question and a refuge in which every troubled soul may take shelter. To the timid, the untaught, and the indolent alike, it is a fascinating appeal.

[1] *Knowledge of God*, Vol. II., p. 219.

But even if it were possible to commit to Rome such responsibilities, Protestants prefer to retain these as from the hand of God, believing that thereby the growth of the soul is promoted, and a wholesome discipline exercised. Our manhood is not developed by living a sheltered life, and by evading the solemnities of a responsible choice. And what is much to the point, the very decision to trust Rome with the custody of one's soul, and blindly to follow wherever her representatives chose to lead, is itself an act of judgement, almost terrifying in its finality.

Let us hear a priest once more talking to the neophyte. He urges that personal doubts and fears shall be relinquished; both are born of presumption. 'Throw these,' he would say, 'where they must be thrown; they need not, and they must not further trouble you. It is not for you to put your judgement over against the judgement of the Church. Who are you, or who am I, that we should presume to question what an infallible authority has declared to be true? If you doubt the Church you doubt Christ, and thereby show that you are not a Christian at all. Here is the Church, and here am I, a priest divinely appointed and divinely endowed, to hear confessions and remit sins. Give yourself utterly and for ever, to the keeping of the Church, and do not presume to raise your puny mind in opposition to the pure, holy and unerring Church of Christ.'

It is the truth mingled with this error that

makes such an appeal so persuasive and effective. The call to a personal surrender; the utter abandonment of the soul to a spiritual authority; the assurance that rest follows such a surrender, are elements of an evangelism to which earnest souls respond.

But the whole of such an appeal must be remorselessly examined, and as soon as we begin to do so, the charm begins to vanish. How, for example, is it proved that the Roman Church is the one and only Church? Is not the Greek Church equal in its antiquity and heritage? When the Eastern and the Western Churches finally separated in 1054, is there any valid evidence that the Roman section retained the qualities of an infallible Church, and that the Greek section since that day has lived in schism? Or again, how is it proved that there is any infallibility at all in a particular Church? Does history support the theory? As a matter of fact the Roman Catholic, which is the only Church that has claimed such an endowment, has, in this respect, broken down repeatedly. The Church, after all, is composed of mortal men, with human infirmities, prone to error, and knowing only in part. To say that there is a divine guarantee that a particular Church shall be kept immune from stumblings and mistakes, is to say what cannot be proved. It is not thus that God governs the world. The Holy Spirit, we rejoice to recognize, is Guide and Revealer; but He does not promise to invest a section or even the whole of the Church, with

such foresight, discrimination and unerring judgement as to entitle it at any time to claim infallibility. That, indeed, is precisely the claim which the humble would shrink with horror from making. And as a matter of fact, what is inferred from such considerations is exactly what Rome illustrates in her pitiful attempts at infallible judgements. Dr. Salmon has dealt with this aspect of the case in a way which Rome has never been able to answer; and as Professor Gwatkin says, 'Till Salmon is refuted, it is superfluous to produce further evidence.'[1]

But the most searching question of all has yet to be asked of the person who is inclining to Rome. Let us put it in this way, You are told that you must not exercise your private judgement in religious matters which are debatable, such as the interpretation of Scripture, the questions raised by science, and the problems of theology; you must indeed surrender mind and reason to the Church, and with all docility receive her guidance. But do you not, in deciding to do this, exercise to an extraordinary degree your own personal and private judgement? Do you not there and then resolve that you are not competent to resolve any further? Do you not by an act of reason, renounce the power and use of reason for the rest of your life? You say, 'The Church is right; the Pope is right; I may be wrong.' But may you not be wrong in saying the Pope is right? Is not this kind

[1] *Knowledge of God*, Vol. II., 217.

of thing an act of intellectual suicide? Is it any wonder that when a nation is Roman Catholic a certain virility passes out of its life? 'Ireland is not made desolate by English taxation but by the locusts of religion.'[1] The power of the priest over Roman Catholics is a pitiful sight. He orders them with the insolence of an autocrat, and fortifies his intolerance by invoking the terrors of eternity.

It is Protestantism alone that provides a religious atmosphere for the development of vital qualities without which manhood falls short of its full power. The repudiation of the right to judge for oneself, is a blow in the end at character. God has given us reason to to be used and there is nothing obscure in the law which determines that the thoughtful and constant use of our reasoning powers is the means by which the finest qualities of the human race are developed.

To exercise the right of private judgement, does not mean freedom to think what we like and arrive at any sort of judgement we choose. We can only think what we like when we have no facts to set a limit to speculation. I may think what I choose about flowers in Mars, for I do not even know that there are any flowers there. I cannot, however, think what I like about the flowers that grow in an Alpine valley, for flowers do grow there, and certain facts concerning their colour, fragrance and species are accessible. Thus my reasoning must function in the domain of fact and there alone.

[1] *Knowledge of God*, Vol. II., 217.

The Protestant then is not at liberty to think what he chooses; he must pay strict regard to the facts as they are known. He lives in a world of truth and fact; God has spoken; He has revealed Himself; He has made known His will. In Jesus Christ we see the Father; through Him we hear the truth. He has made clear to us our duty to God and our neighbour. In the New Testament we read of God's love, and Christ's death for the sins of the world. There, too, we read of His resurrection, and His present ministry. We are not free then, to think what we will about God, Christ, man and duty. We accept the revelation; we accept the facts; but we recognize, with reverence and gratitude, the endowment which makes it possible for us to think, to reason, to confer and ultimately to decide. We are ready to accept help from the wise and devout, but we will not ackowledge the right of priest or pope to tell us what we shall read, when and how we shall pray, what must be our attitude to other Christians, and whom we are to regard as within the Church and whom outside. We bow to no priest, under obligation to tell him the sins and follies of our life. We do not accept him as possessing the authority to remit our sins or direct our penance. We claim the freedom of the sons of God; the truth has made us free; and however enticing may be the blandishments of Rome, we refuse, with firm conviction, to be entangled again in the yoke of bondage.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—On the whole question of private judgement read Lecture III in Salmon's *Infallibility of the Church.*

2.—In what sense do we accept the Bible as authority? See Bishop Gore's *The Reconstruction of Belief*, pp. 864–900. (One Volume Edition.)

3.—The Story of the Promulgation of Papal infallibility is excellently related in the *Ency. Brit.* Vol. XV., p. 754 f. (10th Edit.).

4.—Read all the references to Döllinger in Morley's *Life of Gladstone.* See Index. Gladstone said, 'I have lost my heart to him.'

5.—The Church Historian Prof. H. M. Gwatkin in his Gifford Lectures *The Knowledge of God* has some most trenchant criticisms supported by adequate knowledge. Read Vol. II., pp. 175–240.

6.—In connexion with the subject Dr. Dale's, *Protestantism: its Ultimate Principles*, is still not out of date.

Chapter XIII

THE SACRAMENTS

It is often remarked that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which ought to do more than all else to bind Christians together, and reveal true unity, has too often proved to be the occasion of sharp dispute and division. The reasons for such a deplorable consequence are not wholly discreditable. This Sacrament takes all thoughtful and devout minds into the very heart of the greatest of all mysteries. Christ died for sinful men; by His death upon the tree He offered up a sacrifice once for all. The Lamb of God took away the sins of the world. Thus do we fall back upon the language of Scripture, for some expression of a truth which lies beyond the language of men to express, and which no human mind can fully comprehend.

The Sacrament of the Last Supper brings before the penitent soul the symbols of Christ's broken body, and His shed blood. And somehow, when we look upon these symbols, we realize that we are in spiritual contact with a reality that is too precious to be surrendered, and too vital to be ignored.

To understand then why it is, that differences have so often become acute, we have to remember both, that the truth which is illustrated and represented is beyond our comprehension, and that the reality, with which we are brought into such immediate contact, is of supreme value. It is because men have felt how precious is this rite, that they have been sensitive to any interpretation of it which has appeared to them to rob it of any of its force or beauty.

The Roman Catholic Church has no less than seven Sacraments. These are, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Matrimony, Holy Order, and Extreme Unction. The object of these is evident enough; the whole life, from its beginning to its close, is brought in all its vital decisions and crises under the supervision of the priest. But why some of these so-called Sacraments should be recognized as such, it is impossible to say. As Dr. Cadoux says, 'Other practices have an equal right to sacramental rank, e.g. preaching, feet washing and even the shaking dust off the feet.'[1] The same writer points out that the seven sacraments are by no means of equal antiquity. 'There is no trace in Christian literature of a set of precisely seven Sacraments, until the early part of the twelfth century; and even then the seven were not exactly the same as these now recognized by Rome.'[2] But knowing what we do of the

[1] *Catholicism and Christianity*, p. 392.
[2] Ibid., p. 393.

history of Catholicism, we are not surprised to find a late expediency exalted to the status of an original and divine appointment.

There are two and only two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are divinely ordained, and both their origin and significance are described in the New Testament. The Roman additions are arbitrary, and, as we have seen, without any adequate authority. It should be noted, and not without surprise, that the Roman Catholic Church provides that in the instance of an infant 'dying before a priest can be procured, any other person, whether man, woman or child, may baptize it.' It is beyond our power to reconcile such baptism with the claims which are made on behalf of the priest; but here it is sufficient to note the fact. Baptism, it is held, can be administered only once, and it appears therefore, that an infant, baptized by a lay person, is deprived of the spiritual fullness which accompanies the priestly offices in what is called, by way of distinction, '*solemn* baptism.' The rites observed in this latter sacrament, are a strange mixture, and cannot fail to suggest, to the uninitiated Protestant, that in them we have a survival, or an intrusion, of rites which have their home in the realm of magic, and would be more suitably practised by tribes scarcely emerged from civilization. Here, for example, is a quotation from a Roman Catholic book of devotions, which has perhaps the largest circulation among the devout. In baptism, 'the priest

then breathes three times upon the face of the person to be baptized, and says "Exi ab eo, &c" which is done to drive the devil away and give place unto the Holy Spirit the Paraclete.' Other rites follow, and then the priest takes salt. 'After blessing the salt, which is a symbol of wisdom, and an antidote against corruption, he puts a small quantity into the mouth of the person to be baptized, saying, "Receive the salt of wisdom, let it be to thee a propitiation unto life everlasting."' A little later in the service, 'the priest next exorcises the person to be baptized, and, taking spittle from his mouth, applies it with his thumb to the ears of the person saying, "Epipheta, Be thou opened," and to the nostrils, saying, "In odorem suavitatis. For a savour of sweetness."? In a loud voice adding these words, "Tu autem, &c. But do thou Satan begone."'[1]

We may well ask what all this has to do with 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is obviously an imported element, like so much else that has found a shelter within the Roman Church. The Catholic who believes that this kind of thing will supersede the pure and simple sacrament as it is observed by Protestants, does not appreciate the feelings of the average Englishman, when he first becomes acquainted with these practices. The method of the Roman Catholic, shrewdly enough, is to reach the child. That is his only hope. It may very well be that Protestants need to

[1] *Garden of the Soul*, p. 184-5.

have a more definite conception of the true significance of baptism; but they would infinitely prefer to retain the simplicity and sometimes, perhaps, almost the meaninglessness of the Sacrament, as it is observed among them, than to adopt a semi-pagan ritual which provides for driving out the devil from little ones, of whom Jesus said, 'for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.'

The institution of the Lord's Supper is described both by St. Luke and St. Paul; (Luke xxii, 14-23. 1. Cor. ii, 23-26). With a full knowledge of the questions raised by present-day critics, we can still receive these records as a true account of what actually did take place. We believe that Jesus did say to His disciples, 'This do in remembrance of me.' The institution of this Sacrament has the aspect of truth, and is deeply impressive. It harmonizes with the event which it commemorates, and it breathes the affection and unity which our Lord cherished towards His disciples. When once we know that it did take place, we say to ourselves, it is just what might have been expected. The weaknesses of humanity are, forgetfulness, and misplaced emphasis. The Sacrament safeguards the followers of Christ from both these failures. It is Christ we are called upon to adore in this Sacrament, and it is His death for us we lovingly and penitently recall.

But the history of the Church, as we have already pointed out, is a story of lapses and

recovery; of the natural man intruding where spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned. Hence, when the priest became established within the Church, this Sacrament, which at first was a love-feast, became an occasion for the exercise of a prerogative which the priest was never slow to claim. Hence, as is said in a previous chapter, the Agape was changed into the Eucharist.[1] What should have been a Sacrament of love and unity, kindling in devout and penitent hearts a common adoration for Christ who died, became an instrument by means of which the priest menaced a benighted people, and frequently deprived them of that hope to which all contrite hearts should have access. It is no wonder, then, that the Roman Catholic Church added five other Sacraments to those appointed in the New Testament. When power over people is the quest, it is a temptation to avail ourselves of doubtful methods for the exercise of such an unholy ambition.

The Reformation, in spite of all the prophetic outbursts and the long preparation, came suddenly at the last; and even Luther was not ready for all the questions that were so abruptly raised. The marvel is that he was in the main so right and just in his appreciations. All things were made new. It was not so much a reformation as a revolution. When, therefore, the question of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was raised,

[1] See page 27.

we must not be surprised to find that there were others who saw more clearly than he did, its inner truth and meaning.

Transubstantiation was the doctrine of Rome; and still is. This is a doctrine which crept into the Church during the Dark Ages. 'It was unknown until the eleventh century,'[1] and was afterwards given the status of a dogma. When the words of consecration are pronounced, so we are asked to believe, a change takes place in the bread and wine. A mediaeval and discredited philosophy is invoked, and it is said that while the 'accidents,' that is the outward and perceptible qualities, remain unchanged, the whole underlying substance is converted into the very body and blood of Christ.[2]

It was this doctrine which held the field in Luther's day, and it was in this connexion he hesitated, and failed to follow to its full expression the faith he had so nobly evoked. Luther came to believe in what he called consubtantiation. He adopted the philosophical conceptions of Occam. Consubtantiation involved no miracle. Christ's body was not brought into the elements by the priest; it was there naturally. But its presence in these elements, on sacramental occasions, brought with it a blessing and imparted grace, not because of the presence, but because God had promised that this particular presence of the everywhere present body

[1] C. Anderson Scott, *Evangelical Doctrine, Bible Truth*, p. 130.
[2] See Cadoux, *Catholicism and Christianity*, p. 398.

of Christ would bring blessings to the faithful partaker.[1] The Swiss reformer, Zwingli, could not understand Luther, and Luther was shocked at the teaching of Zwingli. The story of the conference between these two reformers is not a very edifying one; and it is not Luther who emerges with most credit. He was obstinate, and showed a good deal of impatience with a view he could not adopt. Zwingli has generally been credited with teaching that the Sacrament is one merely of commemoration, but this does not do justice to him. He agreed, indeed, with Luther 'in recognizing the Eucharist to be a sacrament of the true body and blood of Christ, and that a spiritual partaking of this body was a means of grace.'[2] We cannot follow the story of this disagreement. Subsequent generations of Protestants have found themselves in sympathy with Zwingli, and have never failed to regret that Luther should have attempted to end a discussion by methods which too closely resemble those of a man who is both proud, and ashamed to admit mistakes. He took a piece of chalk and wrote upon the table, *Hoc est corpus meum*, and, when worsted in argument, as he usually was, appealed to these words as final. At the close he refused Zwingli's hand, and sought to justify this unseemly conduct by saying, 'You have another spirit from us.' Thus does human infirmity clothe itself in self-righteousness.

[1] T. M. Lindsay, *Ency Brit.*, XV. p. 81. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

What is, however, of special importance to us, is the way in which this element of the Protestant faith was received in England. What Henry VIII may have thought or said does not very much matter. He was a Roman Catholic, if anything, at the first, and he was a Roman Catholic, if anything, at the last. But the Reformation in England owed its original impulse to better and greater men than Henry, and during his day the faith was nurtured and expounded by theologians who, in their hearts, did not acknowledge him as spiritual guide and master. He made great use of the plastic Cranmer, after he had worried Wolsey into his grave. But Cranmer, if partly clay, was also partly gold. He had spiritual intuition, and there were others who rejoiced in the preaching of a Gospel which was free from the manifest corruptions of Rome.

Henry's Six Articles, as they were called, were passed by Convocation in 1539. These enforced belief in transubstantiation among other things. In the reign of Edward VI, a set of forty-two articles was drawn up by Cranmer, who had been greatly influenced by continental ideas. These were ruthlessly suppressed in the reign of Mary. But with Elizabeth, however, came the thirty-nine articles, as we now have them. These were drawn up by Archbishop Usher, and after the queen had scrutinized them, they were adopted.

The change which had taken place since

Henry's day, is indicated by comparing his avowed creed with Article XXXI which reads as follows: 'The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of Masses, in which it was commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.'

This article has been as gall and wormwood to many a modern Churchman, and Newman tried hard, with his acute mind, to rob the article of all meaning, before he finally threw the whole overboard and went across to Rome. In his famous Tract XC, he argued sophistically enough, that the article was not written against the creed of the Roman Catholic, but against 'actual existing errors in it.' He pointed out, with what satisfaction to his own fidelity to truth, we are not called upon to determine, that it was not the sacrifice of the Mass that was spoken of, but 'the sacrifice of the Masses!'[1] This distinction made it possible for him to support both the article and the beliefs which ordinary people understood it unequivocally to condemn. It is interesting to recall, however, that when once Newman had gone over to Rome, he abandoned not only the article, but

[1] Sir W. Joynson Hicks in *The Prayer Book Crisis*, p. 55f.

his own previous defence of it. He said it did undoubtedly speak of 'the Sacrifice of the Mass as a blasphemous fable.' A simpler man would have seen that from the first.

The mention of Newman carries us on to the nineteenth century, and before we discuss what took place then, we may close the present chapter by a brief affirmation of Protestant teaching concerning the Sacrament of the Last Supper. We do thereby commemorate our Lord's death, showing it forth to ourselves and to the world. At the same time, we 'receive from Christ a communication of Himself so full and so complete, that it can be described as feeding on His Flesh,' Further, we 'seal in the most solemn way, the unity of the Church as a family of God partaking of one heavenly food.'[1]

And these three aspects must be blended, if we are to appreciate the fullness of the faith. A mere commemoration does not satisfy our hearts. We are frequently conscious of an experience of Christ, so rich and satisfying, that nothing less than a spiritual impartation of His own life and joy can adequately describe what takes place in the soul. And it is in such moments as these that we have a prophetic glimpse of the visible unity which must surely be the end of all our divisions and our struggles.

[1] C. Anderson Scott, *Evangelical Doctrine, Bible Truth*, p. 120

FURTHER STUDY

1.—For a most illuminating and complete outline of the history of doctrine, both of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, see C. Anderson Scott's *Evangelical Doctrine, Bible Truth.* Chapters VI to XI.

2.—Dr. C. Ryder Smith's volume, *The Sacramental Society*, is invaluable; and for our subject, pages 136–185 should be studied.

3.—Canon Armitage Robinson has a brief, but trustworthy, article on Baptism in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica.* Dr. Plummer is more expansive, and in some respects less satisfactory, in Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible.* He looks favourably upon baptismal regeneration.

4.—The volume which reports on the Lausanne Conference, entitled *Faith and Order* gives a very clear account of the views concerning the Sacraments, by Bishop Nicolas on behalf of the Greek Church (which like Rome, has Seven Sacraments), by Dr. Vernon Bartlett, of the Free Church Doctrine, and by Canon Quick, on behalf of the Anglican, pp. 286–320.

Chapter XIV

TO-DAY

No one can look out upon the religious condition of England to-day without deep misgiving. There is much to encourage, it is true; but on the other hand there is a great deal that is unsatisfactory and perplexing. We should all feel happier if the Protestants of our country were more thoroughly grounded and established in the faith. There is no adequate appreciation of the issues that are at stake. While the Romanist is pressing his claims in season and out of season, Protestants are apt to brand with fanaticism the person who presses for a clearer perception of the vital differences between the faith of the one and the other. We believe that Protestantism is essential to the health of the nation, and that on its maintenance the development of the Kingdom of God largely depends. It is not unkind to point out the fact once more that in any nation where Roman Catholicism has sway, elements of vigour and independence are lacking. The power of the priest in some countries is almost terrifying. People who take but little notice of the police or the law, are cowed into an abject silence by the

glance of the priest. Even in England, observers tell us of a power exercised by him which is almost incredible. People of the poorer classes literally submit to the control of their masters, who do not hesitate to be severe when they have reason to suspect any defection or disloyalty. We know of persons standing in a crowd who have been ordered to their homes by the priest, as though they were irresponsible children. We have no desire to labour such a point, but it is not possible to ignore it. It is, therefore, in the interests of religious freedom and national greatness, as well as of the purity of the faith, that we plead for a fuller understanding of the essentials of Protestantism.

To estimate with any degree of accuracy what took place in the nineteenth century, we must glance at the eighteenth; for certain movements in the nineteenth century had their origin clearly enough in the eighteenth. The religious condition of England in the early part of the eighteenth century was almost incredibly barren and disheartening. Deism was the creed of large numbers, if creed it may be called; and the one thing that sober people appeared to dread most of all, was 'enthusiasm.' Bishop Butler's lament, in 1736, that 'it is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious'[1] may be exaggerated by the native gloom of this pro-

[1] *The Analogy* 'Advertisement.'

found thinker, but no remission in the meaning of his words can be tolerated which robs the passage of its signficance as a statement concerning religion at that time. The clergy, themselves, were frequently without any profession of a Christian experience. In many instances they were not apparently interested in religion. They were not only fond of sport, but they indulged in many pastimes which degraded, both their profession, and the people to whom they should have ministered. The necessary Church services were mumbled through with an indecent haste, to the few somnolent people who cared to attend.

Then came the great Revival. It was one of the shining days in history, when John Wesley turned into the little meeting in Aldersgate Street, in that May day of 1738, almost exactly two years after Butler's view of the nation's religious life was published. Wesley felt his heart 'strangely warmed.' From that moment he was aflame with zeal and joy. He gave himself, without any reservation, to the preaching of salvation through Christ, to the people of the land. Supported by that unrivalled preacher, George Whitefield, and the equally unrivalled singer Charles Wesley, he wrought with the unquenchable zeal of an apostle.

We need not attribute the far-spreading revival to Wesley alone; but without him, it is difficult to imagine that it would have been more than a passing phase of spiritual quickening. He did not argue with the

Deist, but 'offered salvation' to all sorts and conditions of people. Soon the parched land began to show signs of tender green, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Little companies of people, in nearly every town he visited, were gathered into societies, and by prayer, fellowship, and testimony, maintained the sacred fires. It is not too much to say that the whole tone of English society was changed. There was a new attitude to religion. Christianity was recognized as a power which redeems and sanctifies all human life and its relationships. In a very few years this tireless evangelist had succeeded in planting Methodist Societies from one end of the land to the other.

It is perhaps vain to speculate, but who can help wondering at times, how differently the current of English history would have run had the Anglican Church been liberal and farseeing enough to have welcomed Wesley, and to have incorporated his glowing societies of converted people, as an integral part of a Church which he never ceased to love, and never willingly forsook? It may very well be that the present divisions in that Church are to some extent the penalty paid for her failure in vision and hospitality. What did happen, as we know, is that Wesley was driven to organize his communities without any manifest relationship with the Church in which he had been ordained as a priest. The Methodist Church grew, and soon became so powerful and so conscious of its strength, that,

having been repelled, it simply went on with its great work of evangelizing England, and sending missionaries to the ends of the earth. It has continued to grow without intermission, and to-day it is claimed that there are between eleven and twelve million members and probationers in Methodist Churches, throughout the world.

It is a truism that the Evangelical Revival was far wider in its range and beneficence than Methodism, and that the Anglican Church shared very definitely in the widespread blessing. No one can doubt what is so historically evident, but it remains as a hard and deplorable fact that the evangelical section which remained inside, was not powerful enough to transform the whole body into an evangelical Church. Had Methodism been incorporated, the Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century might have been of another sort, and altogether friendlier to the Protestant faith.

However futile such wistful speculations may be, we now have to recognize that the Anglican Church, which was so unhappily handicapped in the days of the Reformation, by the grotesque interventions of Henry VIII, and repressed again by the cold and calculated cruelty of Mary, never completely escaped from the fetters of Romanism.[1] Her witness has recently been somewhat cynically summarized by one of her own bishops as 'Roman Catholic in essence and

[1] Cf. *Life of Gladstone*, Vol. I., p. 236 (Cheap Edition).

Protestant by accident.' The Evangelical Revival gave the Church its opportunity, but, like Jerusalem, it did not know the day of its visitation. Methodism was organized apart from the Church, and, whatever may have been the loss to Methodism, the loss to the Anglican Church was infinitely greater. Methodism would have given strength to those anaemic sections which were essential to a full and vital Protestantism.

When, therefore, just a hundred years after Wesley began his work, there was 'the sound of a going' in the Anglican Church, and spiritual intensity began to express itself in a holy fervour, the movement was to be led by men like Newman, Froude, Pusey, Rose, and Keble. The hunger of soul, and passion for reality, to which these men confessed, were bound up with an attitude of violent dislike of Protestantism. Their eyes were fixed upon tradition, and their hearts were, for the most part, in the Roman Catholic Church. Many of them, indeed, completely severed the slender ties which bound them to Anglicanism, and became converts to Rome. The greatest blow of all was when Newman went. He was endowed with an intellect of penetrating keenness, and an ability to discuss delicate distinctions until it was not certain that anything was certain, except what Rome declared to be so. Without desiring it, he became a leader. He was almost irresistible in his appeals; and when his arguments were unconvincing, his life prevailed.

But while many adherents of the new movement went over to Rome, the larger number remained; and their successors, to-day, do nothing to conceal their hostility to Protestantism. Anglo-Catholics as a whole, do not pretend to regard the Reformation as other than a tragedy. It is vain, in such circumstances, to predict what course the Anglican Church may take, or what will be its ultimate creed. The bishops, who are many of them men of superb intellectual power, and with acknowledged claims to be great spiritual leaders, profess to see in these various elements within their Church, the proof of a comprehensiveness which they say is the hope, and even guarantee of the ultimate unity of Christendom. The idea is not one to be lightly set aside; and if the reasons for such a belief were satisfactory, tens of thousands of Protestants would hail the sign. But the kind of variety that exists within the Anglican Church is not simply that of different views, held by men who acknowledge a single authority, and profess a common objective. The one section renounces Protestantism, and the other is hostile to Rome. The unity, therefore, at present existing, is the unity that subsists between black and white, or friend and enemy. The hosts march in opposite directions; and it is difficult to withhold the application of Kipling's words, 'Never the twain shall meet.'

The bishops, therefore, who can see, in their divided and mutually hostile ranks to-day, the possibilities of a force which

shall ultimately reconcile and harmonize the scattered Church of Christ, seem to us to be a little too eager to throw the mantle of episcopal approval upon a condition of things that calls rather for the exercise of firm decisions and emphatic authority. The bishops, obviously, have not the control which their high office presupposes. Their authority is less than it ought to be. For far too long a time, practices have been taking root which ought never to have been tolerated. Whether the resolve to rule more firmly in the future, which the bishops have announced, will be fulfilled, we are not called upon to predict; but the signs at present are not favourable. Protestants would, indeed, welcome such an exercise of authority in dealing with men who deliberately flout the Protestant faith and invite punishment. There is reason, however, to believe that the bishops themselves, in some instances, have little love for a fearless and definite Protestantism. At any rate, they are far more tolerant in permitting phases of Romanism than their own laymen. It was evident, during the Prayer Book controversy of 1928, that, in order to secure obedience, the bishops were too ready to make concessions to those clergy who were Anti-Protestant.

Meanwhile, the duty of the Free Churches is as clear as day. We have to bear our testimony to the truth; and to be eager and dauntless in our search for all its implica-

tions. The pretensions of Rome must be explored, and the perversions of truth embedded in history, must be exposed. We have young people in our Churches with zeal, courage and charm; our hope is in them. It is our solemn duty to instruct those whom God has given us, and show them that the faith of our fathers, for which they suffered, is the faith that freed Europe from tyranny; that it is the faith of the early Church, and that its foundations are in the living pages of the Word of God.

FURTHER STUDY

1.—For 'time and conditions' of eighteenth century, see *New History of Methodism*, Chapter I. Consult also the voluminous pages of Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*. 3 Vols.

2.—Read *Wesley's Journal*, Standard Edition, Vol. I. pp. 470–84.

3.—Dean Church's *Oxford Movement* has the breadth, culture, and wise judgements, which characterize all his writings.

4.—For an account of the Evangelical Movement within the Anglican Church read, Canon Wilson's Essay on 'The Developments of Evangelicalism,' in the volume *Liberal Evangelicalism: an Interpretation*.

5.—The two Chapters on 'The Beginnings of Reaction' and 'The Ritualistic Aggression,' in Sir Wm. Joynson Hicks' volume *The Prayer Book Crisis* may be studied.

6.—*Aspects of Protestantism* by Rev. A. Herbert Gray, M.A. will repay a careful reading.

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